24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4

A STUDY OF POLYANDRY

000

BY

H. R. H. PRINCE PETER
OF GREECE AND DENMARK
Ll. D., Ph. D.

MOUTON & CO · 1963 · THE HAGUE

[Title page]

[p.301]

CHAPTER 4

THE POLYANDRY OF THE TIBETANS

T
WT
101

Tibetan culture is not restricted to the actual political boundaries of the area marked on the map as Tibet. Fluctuating and ill-defined as these boundaries are in themselves (Amdo (*A-mDo*),[1] in north-eastern Tibet and the eastern part called Kham (*K'hams*) were looked upon by China until lately as provinces of her own, respectively named Tsinghai and Sikang), they still lie well within the far more extensive region where Tibetan culture is to be found. The total area over which the Dalai Lama and his government recently held sway was generally considered to cover 600,000 square miles – a very vast one. The five million or so inhabitants of this country have, despite their small numbers, produced a culture which is original, peculiarly adapted to the extraordinary environment in which the pople live, and sufficiently characteristic to be immediately recognizable when it is encountered outside its boundaries.

The extensive distribution and general uniformity everywhere of Tibetan culture are aspects which travellers in the regions where it is to be found have often remarked upon. From the east on the borders of Chinese Szechwan, to Kashmir in the west, from lake Koko Nor in the north to the Himalayas and even beyond them to the south (see Map 5), that is over thousands of miles, Tibetan culture forms an entity of its own, in which those who have elaborated it for their use move

T
WT
104

---

[1] Romanization of Tibetan spelling is in accordance with the following personal transcription:

ka, k'ha, ga, nga,
cha, ch'ha, ja, nya,
ta, t'ha, da, na,
pa, p'ha, ba, ma,
tsa, ts'ha, dza, wa,
zha, za, a, ya, ra, la,
sha, sa, ha, a,
i, u, e, o, (phonetically modified vowels shows as: *ä, ü, ö*); *wazur* = *w*.

Prefixed and superscribed consonants are shown by a small letter before a capital; thus *rGya*. Tibetan names and words in the text are given phonetically in accordance with the local pronunciation, followed by the actual Tibetan orthography, romanized in brackets.

T WT 101 about often without any ambition whatsoever to cross over from it into the world beyond.

T WT 101 121 595 The area where I investigated the custom of polyandry as practised by the Tibetans is thus wide-spread, so wide-spread in fact, that it can easily be said to constitute the largest of any in which this custom is followed. The Tibetans, or those of Tibetan culture (the two are synonymous in our context) consequently constitute the biggest human group on earth in which this form of matrimony is to be found. It did seem worth while, for this reason, to give it more attention than any other, particularly when the advanced state of its culture is taken into consideration.

WT 101 114 595 In the following divisions of Part I, I propose, first, to give an account of the polyandry which is to be found among the inhabitants of the western Himalayas, in those districts of India which, together with the Tibetan province of Ngari Korsum (*mNga-ris Kor-gSum*), are collectively known as Western Tibet. They include the valley of Lahul in India proper, the plateau of Rupchu and the province of Ladak in Kashmir. In Rupchu, I came across nomadic people from Ngari Korsum in Tibet, Chang-pa (*Byang-pa*), called thus after the Chang T'hang (*Byang-T'hang*) or "northern plain" in Tibet, who gave me a good account of the type of polyandry practised among themselves and among the officials beyond the border.

T 101 114 595 In the next divisions of Part II, I will give an account of the polyandry of the Tibetans of Tibet proper, such as I was able to study it in Kalimpong. This will cover mainly the two central Tibetan provinces of U (*dbUs*) and Tsang (*gTsang*) known collectively as U-Tsang (*dbUs-gTsang*) in which are to be found the capital, Lhasa (*lHa-sa*), and the two other largest cities in the country, Shigatse (*gShis-Ka-rtse*) and Gyantse (*rGyal-rTse*). I will, however, also give an account of the polyandry of the inhabitants of other parts of Tibet, as it is to be found in outlying provinces such as Kham, among the nomads of the Chang T'hang and in such regions as, for example, the Chumbi valley (Tromo (*Gro-mo*) in Tibetan).

T 114 595 In the last division of the same Part II, I shall deal with a very special case of polyandry which I believe was hardly known prior to the research work which I have done upon it, namely, that in which a wife is held in common by fathers and sons. Relatively frequent in the central provinces of Tibet, and more especially so in Tsang, this exceptional type of polyandrous marriage is looked upon with curiosity even by the Tibetans themselves in other parts of the country. It was my good for-

Tibet AJ1

T

tune to come across not one, but several cases of this father-and-son 114
polyandry, and I shall give as concise an account as possible of them 595
since my findings have already been questioned in certain publications, although, I am glad to say, without the support of any factual evidence.

PART I

THE POLYANDRY OF THE TIBETANS OF WESTERN TIBET (LAHUL, RUPCHU AND LADAK)

WT
The three areas of Lahul, Rupchu and Ladak are now included within 101
Indian territory, the first in the State of Himachal Pradesh, the two 131
others in Kashmir. They are, however, predominantly regions of Tibetan 648
culture. Historical links with Tibet proper are ancient and solid, and, today, contact is kept up through the Lamaist Church, through merchants and through marriages between members of the leading families.

WT
My itinerary lay first through Lahul an my way up from the plains of 114
India and for this reason, I shall begin with this district of what was then the undivided Punjab. I shall go on next to Rupchu and then to Ladak, as my journey was continued through these two parts of Kashmir territory.

A. POLYANDRY IN LAHUL

WT
The name of Lahul is presumably derived from the Tibetan Lho-Yül 101
(*lHo-Yul*), meaning "southern country", an appellation applied by the early Ladakis to the valley when it was at one time under their rule. The local name for Lahul is *Garzha*, the meaning of which is unknown.

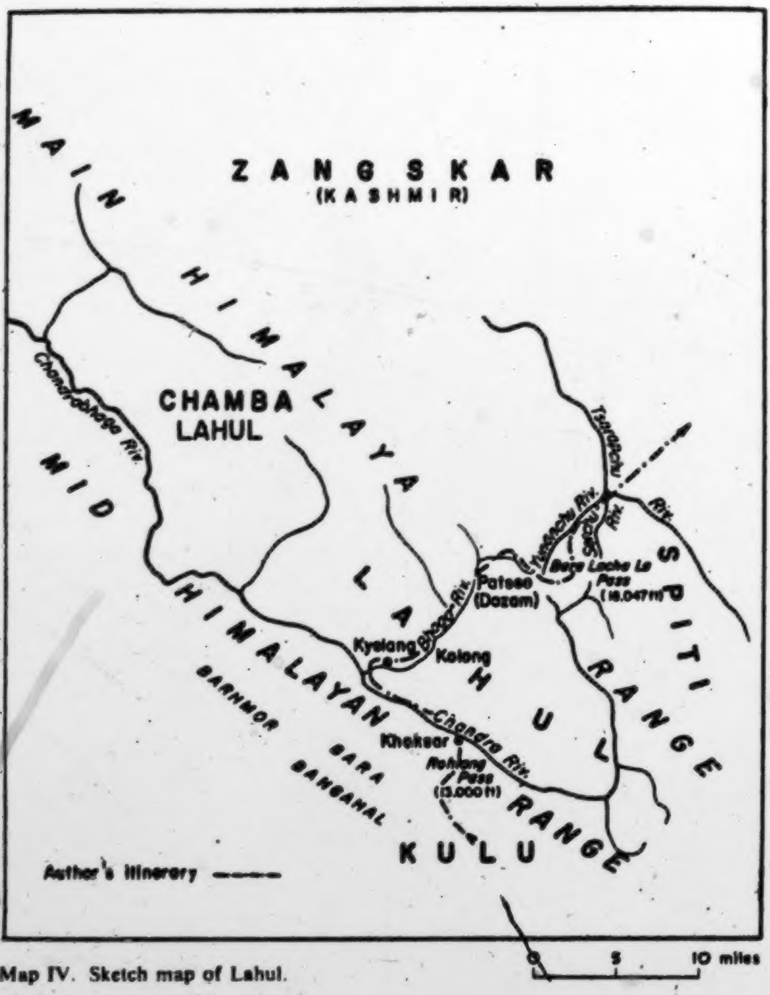
1. ENVIRONMENT

WT
Lahul covers an area of 2,250 square miles and is situated in that part 133
of the Himalayas where the Chenab of the Punjab has its source (see [131]
Map 4). The waters of this river originally spring in two different directions, one south-east, the Chandra, and the other south-west, the Bhaga, both very close to each other on either side of the Baralacha (*Para-la-rTse*) pass, 16,047 feet high, in the main Himalayan range. The two rivers, when reaching the mid-Himalayan range, turn north-west, and coming together just south of the capital, Kyelang, run out of Lahul into

[Text Continues on P 305]

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4

101
102
103
131
133


ZANGSKAR
(KASHMIR)
MAIN HIMALAYA
CHAMBA LAHUL
Chandrabhaga Riv.
MID HIMALAYAN RANGE
LAHUL
Tsarapchu
Yunancha Riv.
Serchu Riv.
Riv.
Bara Lacha La Pass (16,047ft)
Patseo (Dazam)
Bhaga Riv.
Kyelang
Kolong
SPITI RANGE
Chandra Riv.
Khoksar
Rohtang Pass (13,000 ft)
BARHMOR
BARA BANGAHAL
KULU
Author's itinerary
0 5 10 miles

114

Map IV. Sketch map of Lahul.

133 neighbouring Chamba, eventually to join up with the Indus basin in the plains. The valleys formed by the Chandra and the Bhaga constitute the inhabited part of Lahul, as does also the valley of their united Chandra-Bhaga course. Running towards the north, and springing also from the Baralacha pass, from a lake between the sources of the two other rivers, is the Yunan river, which joins up with the Tsarab Chu (*Ch'hu*, "water", "river" in Tibetan) in Spiti.

101 131 This hydrographic system of the Chandra-Bhaga or upper Chenab, which constitutes Lahul, is bordered to the north by Zangskar in Kashmir, to the east by Spiti, to the south by Kulu, Bara Bangahal and Barhmor, and to the west by Chamba-Lahul. All these non-Kashmiri areas were formerly part of the Punjab (Chamba was one of its princely states), but have now all been included in the new State of Himachal Pradesh.

133 The entire region is a high altitude one, the ranges north and south rising to a mean elevation of 18,000 feet; the lowest point is the Rothang pass in the mid-Himalayan range, and the highest peaks are well over 21,000 feet. The Chandra-Bhaga river, later to became the Chenab, does not flow below 9,000 feet at its exit from Lahul into Chamba. Kyelang is approximately at a height of 10,000 feet.

132 In consequence of the altitude the climate is a cold one. The mean annual temperature in the capital is only 43.3° F. with the coldest average temperature in February (23.° F.) and the highest in July-August (61.7° F.). The rainfall is scanty, reaching only six inches during the monsoon season in India from June to September. There is more rain in the winter months due to storms of high elevation; these bring the
annual rainfall at Kyelang up to 23.08 inches for the whole year. For [241
this reason agriculture has to make use of irrigation, but as there is 312]
plenty of perennial water from glaciers and from melting snow, this is
rather an advantage to cultivation.

133 137 [361] The scenery of Lahul is one of grandeur and it is impossible not to be impressed by the towering, snow-capped peaks, the bleak upper slopes of the mountains, the green pastures dotted with flocks of sheep in the summer, the poplar groves lower down fringing the flat, terraced fields of both food and cash crops, and the small villages of closely packed houses, flat-roofed and of an earthen colour, already very like the typical architecture of Tibet. This is the scene which meets the eye when the traveller is following the river bank in one of the valleys. When these are left behind, and the colder air starts blowing down from the heights, the vegetation becomes rare, and very soon ice and snow fields are reached, even in the summer, before crossing one of the high altitude passes.

000 snow fields are reached, even in the summer, before crossing one of the high altitude passes.

782 Here and there, all over Lahul, Buddhist monuments which are so typical of Tibet are to be seen along the road side. These include *chötens* (*mCh'hod-rTen*), Tibetan equivalents of the Indian funerary *stupas*, and *mani* walls. The first are cenotaphs erected by the pious in order to gain merit, the others are long walls made up of large slabs of stone on which prayers have been inscribed; generally, the prayer *Om Mani Padme Hung* is the principal one to be seen, and hence the name *mani* for these walls. Around the fields near the houses of the cultivators, and in greater numbers clustering round monasteries known here as *gompas* (*Gon-pa*), tall, white banners, also printed all over with consecrated prayers, can be seen fluttering in the wind. They are prayer flags and, while they bring a sense of security to those who believe in their efficiency in combatting evil spirits, they are also very decorative, greatly enhancing the picturesqueness of the landscape.

2. POPULATION

162 It is difficult to estimate exactly what the number of the population in
Lahul really is. A census can only be taken in the summer when the
winter snows have thawed, and at that time most Lahulis leave for
neighbouring regions and many emigrants (mainly graziers) come in.
It is estimated that the figure should be in the neighbourhood of 10,000
inhabitants, that is to say, a very small one. The entire region is sparcely
162 populated, with everybody living almost exclusively in the three main
361 valleys. There are no real towns, but quite a few villages, which stand
in their fields and not on spurs of hills as is often the case in hilly
country. It is mainly visiting shepherds who take flocks to the summer
pasturages.

771 The people of Lahul are a mixed collection. They speak four distinctly
[199] different languages and belong mainly to two principal religions.
These are Hinduism and Buddhism, but it cannot be said that a clear
cut distinction exists between the adherents of the two since many profess
[564] to belong to both. There are also some low-caste menials, blacksmiths
called Lohars (Garas (*mGar-ba*) in Tibetan) and agriculturalists
called Shipis or Dagis, who appear to follow some primitive form of
animism. The pure Hindus of Lahul are Brahmins, very exclusive in
[793] their behaviour, and the Buddhists are all of the Ka-gyut-pa (*bK-brGyut-pa*) or Drug-pa (*aBrug-pa*) sect of lamaism from Bhutan. This is a more

Lahul

lax order than that of the established Church in Tibet, and allows mar- 771
riage of the clergy. 793

Three of the languages spoken are Bunan, Manchet and Tinan, all 197
of them non-Aryan, non-Tibetan in origin, and closely related basically
with the Munda language of north-east India. Inmixtures have, however, taken place and very many foreign words and forms have crept into the three languages, Bunan being more infused with classical Tibetan, and Manchat and Tinan having acquired many words from the Aryan Indian languages of Chamba and Kulu. In some parts of the Chandra and of the Bhaga valleys, round Khoksar and Kolong, Tibetan is spoken too, in its local dialectual form. Kyelang is in the centre of the Bunan speaking area, while Tinan is spoken east of the confluent of the Chandra and the Bhaga, and Manchat west of the same right up to the border of Chamba. Tibetan is the *lingua franca* of the whole country, although it is perhaps less understood in the Manchat speaking
area (that is in the valley of the Chandra-Bhaga) than elsewhere. Liter- 212
acy is quite high among the Buddhists, their children, as is the custom also in Tibet, going at an early age to learn to read and write Tibetan in the monasteries.

The people have a distinct mongoloid appearance, although not as 144
pronounced as that of the occasional visitor from Tibet often encountered during the summer months. In dress, the men at least, wear 291
clothes very like those of the inhabitants of Tibet. A long, loose robe of dirty white or dark coloured wool is worn with a sash round the waist, while it is buttoned up over the right shoulder with Chinese type fastenings. On their heads they wear small caps such as in Kulu, or Tibetan embroidered hats with fur flaps turned up, but which can be let down if needed over the ears.

The women have a much more characteristic way of dressing which 291
is restricted to the valley of Lahul, so that it is possible to tell at once 301
that they come from there. The robe which they wear is secured at the 302
waist with a sash from the back of which hang two strings of brass [184]
beads; these are plaited into the hair and pass under the girdle, over which a square piece of mother of pearl shell is fastened into the extremities of the plaits. On the head, the hair is collected at the centre on top and there a saucer shaped silver ornament, often with a turquoise in the middle, is fastened down. Over the temples, on either side, a ball of amber called *poshel* (*sPos-Shel*) (imported from East Prussia) is
attached with silver links to the centre piece on top of the head. Over 291
the robe, a thick woollen coat is often worn, and trousers can be glimpsed

Lahul

29 stretching down below the hem of the gown. In the summer, Bata gym shoes seem to be the usual footwear adopted by both sexes, but I heard that during the winter months boots (probably of the Tibetan woollen variety) are generally worn.

3. HISTORY

175 648 Historically, it would appear that Lahul is a mountainous area in which Munda speaking aborigines from India and Tibetans were successfully amalgamated, perhaps some 2000 years B.C. Hiuen Tsiang, the 7th century A.D. Chinese Buddhist pilgrim to India, is the first to mention the country officially, in the narrative of his journey. Three influences seem at that time to have been noticeable in Lahul: Ladaki from the north, Chamba from the west, and Kulu from the south. All through its history the area has been a meeting place of these three outside political rivalries, and it has always succumbed to one of them, never having successfully achieved any independence of its own.

The local chieftains, known originally as Jos (from the Tibetan *Jo-wo* (*Jo-bo*), "lord") and later as Thakurs (an Indian appellation of rank), did nevertheless attain some autonomous status, but were always subject to paying tribute to whichever side was uppermost at the time. After the Ladaki domination of the 11th century, Chamba and Kulu united to drive out Tibetan influence, which was, however, restored about one hundred and fifty years later. With the centralization of the lamaist monastic system in Lhasa in the 14th century, children were sent to the Tibetan capital for education, and this fact had a lasting effect on the culture of Lahul, giving it a pronounced Tibetan character.

With the fall of the Ladaki kingdom to the Mongolians in the latter part of the seventeenth century, Kulu seized the opportunity to invade Lahul, and to bring it entirely under its sway. Barbog, the leading house of Lahul, resisted and was deprived of its powers as a consequence. [631] The other *jos* submitted, were given land (*jagirs*), and their change of title to that of Thakur probably dates back to that time. Since then, they have tried to pass themselves off as Rajputs, but their Tibetan origin is not to be doubted.

In 1840, the Sikhs of the Punjab took over Lahul, together with Kulu. They kept it until the British defeated them six years later and established their rule in the valley. It remained thus as long as the British Raj held sway and only passed to the present Republic of India as a consequence of independence being granted in 1947.

4. ADMINISTRATION

In 1938, when I was in Lahul, the administration and collection of land 105
revenue was in the hands of Thakur Partap Chand. A 3rd class honor- 631
ary Magistrate with his court in Kyelang, he was called the Wazir and [651]
was also Sub-Registrar and responsible for supplies to all travellers, official or not, such as myself. The British had obviously found it convenient to continue the old system by which the Thakurs (or Jos) had always ruled the country.

Thakur Partap Chand was the son of Thakur Amar Chand who for many years was the principal administrator, under the British, of Lahul. His family, which is that of the Thakurs of Kolong, had been entrusted with the position since 1851. Thakur Mangal Chand, uncle of Partrap Chand, was still alive when I was in Kyelang, and he became one of my [115]
informants.

The three other Thakur families of Lahul are those of Barbog, Gungrang and Gondhla, the first of these taking precedence. The kings of Ladak still intermarry with this family, but the present descendant of the ancient royal house is married to a lady of the Thakurs of Gungrang. They are the largest landlords and are considered senior to Kolong.

5. LAND-TENURE AND ECONOMY

Cultivated land, throughout the fourteen *khotis* into which Lahul is 105
administratively divided, falls into two categories: *Khalsa khoti* or Gov- 423
ernment land, and *jagir khoti* or land of the landlords. The Kolong [631]
Thakur, as Wazir of Lahul, is responsible for the collection of revenue [651]
from the first of these two, having been entrusted with the task by the British. *Khalsa khotis*, by far the most numerous, are looked upon legally as *jeolas* (allotments) made over by the paramount power to individuals who, in exchange, pay taxes and render services to the Government. These holdings are never very large, rarely exceeding two [241]
acres, and often well below that figure. Among the polyandry-practising Buddhists, they remain undivided, as we shall see, and are thus generally of the same size as when they were originally granted. With the Hindu Brahmins of the Chandra-Bhaga valley, much partition has taken place at marriage, and the holdings are consequently very reduced in size.

Jagir khotis are exclusively those of the Thakurs of Gungrang, Kolong [631]
and Gondhla, the first of these having the largest piece of land. Fields

105 423 631 within these *khotis* are of three main kinds: the Thakur's personal property known as his *garhpan*; fields cultivated by junior members of his family and by retainers and by farm servants; holdings granted to villagers. The owners in the last two categories are not tenants but real subordinate proprietors; they cannot be evicted, and have proprietry rights just as any other freeholder.

The Thakur's *garphan* is cultivated by *k'hang ch'hung pas*, that is farm servants, helped on special occasions by a concourse of landholders. The whole produce goes to the *jagirdar* or landlord. Fields cultivated by junior family members (*do-hai*), by family retainers (*ch'hag-shi*) and by *k'hang ch'hung-pas* for themselves, are rent free. It is presumed that they pay for their holdings by the services which they render to the head of the family or to their master. In this category should be included land given out to blacksmiths (*gara-zhing* (*mGar-ba-zhing*)), musicians (*be-zhing*), astrologers (*onpo-zhing*), physicians (*man-zhing*), Buddhist monasteries (*gonpa* (*Gon-pa*)-*zhing*), Buddhist shrines (*lha-zhing*), and for the maintenance of irrigation canals (*yur-zhing*).

Holdings granted to villagers are called *jeolas* (allotments) as in the case of *khalsa khotis*, and the villagers to whom they are given are known as *yulpa*. These pieces of land are larger than the previous category, often reaching five acres and more. The owner is bound to pay [651] [466] revenue (called *thal*) in exchange, and he used to be subject to forced labour or *begar*, but this has been abolished now. There are a number of services he must render, such as serving the Thakur on certain harvesting days, stabling his horses, carrying over the passes, bringing rice [651] for him from Kulu, etc. In lieu of these services, he often pays cash nowadays, thus converting payment in kind into tax money.

105 233 631 651 The Thakur of Kolong, as Wazir of Lahul, is responsible for collecting grazing fees or *tirni* (known in Tibetan as *ri-gi-thal*). He is entitled to keep one fourth of this money for himself, while paying the rest to the Government. Graziers are mainly Gaddi shepherds from Kulu and Chamba, and their sheep are used as pack animals for the transport of grain.

105 221 439 The Lahulis are great traders and only remain in Lahul long enough to cultivate their crops. In July, the men leave for Western Tibet to buy wool and *pashmina* (a fine variety of wool from which Kashmir wool is made) for cash. They send the goods back on the backs of their sheep, then return the animals for winter grazing in Tibet. In August, many men attend the fair at Patseo in the upper part of the valley, where they

exchange local products for salt, borax and wool (including *pashmina*) 105
with Tibetan traders. This merchandise they export to Kulu, again on 221
the backs of their flocks, returning in the same way with grain for the 439
winter. During November, the sheep are once again driven down to the lower Himalayan foothills, where they remain until the spring for pasturage. Many Lahulis find work of a menial kind in the plains during the winter months, especially in forestry.

The only time of the year when crops can be grown in Lahul is from 105
May to November. The rest of the year, the snow lies thick on the 241
ground and no cultivation is possible. The population of the country lives off only 5% of the total area, the rest being waste land unfit for agriculture. The water supply, in spite of the scanty rainfall, is made ample from glaciers and snow drifts, and the soil itself is extraordinarily fertile. The result is that crops are grown with amazing regularity and there has never been a famine in this part of India as long as anyone can remember.

The main food crops are barley, buckwheat and wheat – very much the same as they are in Tibet proper. Peas, potatoes, and grass to make hay for the cattle are also grown, and apple and plum trees produce a
good harvest of fruit. Cash crops consist exclusively of *kut* or rusta [439]
(*Ru-s Ta*) (*Inula Helenium*), a leguminous plant the roots of which are used to make aromatic burning stocks or *joss-sticks*,[1] much in demand in Buddhist and other temples throughout countries of Chinese culture.

The men in Lahul plough and sow grain. The women weed the fields [462]
and collect the harvest. The men then thresh the crops or tread them by foot and with animals, winnowing the grain and storing the latter for the winter in their houses.

The domestic animals of Lahul are the *dzo* (a cross between a yak 105
and a cow), sheep, goats, ponies and donkeys. There were no motor- [231]
able roads at the time of my visit, but I understand that the Indian army [491]
is about to build a track passable for jeeps, which will enable them to reach Ladak from the south.

6. FIELD-WORK RESEARCH ON POLYANDRY IN LAHUL

If I have described the background of Lahul society at some length, it 595
is because I believe this to have considerable bearing on the understand- 795
ing of polyandry and on the reasons for its existence among the people of Tibetan affinity in the Himalayas. It is to be noticed that only those

---

[1] *Joss* = from the Portuguese *Dios*, God, hence "God-sticks".

595 795 who are predominantly Buddhist in Lahul follow the custom, the Hindu Brahmins of the Chandra-Bhaga valley finding it most repugnant to do so.

595 631 It was difficult to discover if the Thakurs were polyandrous or not. As Tibetans and Buddhists, they should follow this system of matrimony since it is part of their culture. They have, however, come very much under Hindu influence with the past conquests of Kulu, and I have related how, since that time, they like to consider themselves Rajputs. For this reason, they denied to me that they were polyandrous, but I found it hard to take them at their word. Probably, they carry on with this arrangement in private, when no inconvenient witnesses are about to hold it against them as high caste, Kshatriya Hindus.

595 No sooner had I arrived in Kyelang and met the Wazir, Thakur Partap Chand, than the latter, on being informed of what I was looking for, took me straight along to a polyandrous family that he knew in the town. It was on the 21st of June, 1938, and to me, this remained a memorable day, for here at last, after hearing so much about it, was polyandry as I was seeking it.

The household to which I was taken was one called Barun-pa, and it was situated in the upper (northern) part of Kyelang. We went there [342] at five o'clock in the afternoon and, after walking down narrow streets between mud walls, we entered through a doorway into a courtyard and climbed up by a narrow staircase onto a terrace on the first floor outside a large room, which appeared to be the living quarters of the family.

A young man was introduced as Sönam (*bSod-Nams*), twenty one years old, head of the house of Barun-pa since the death of his father. [591] He was dressed in a long, yellow silk gown and wore a small Lahuli cap on his head. This made him out to be a person of somewhat better means than most, and since his house was not situated on any *jaghir* land of any of the Thakurs, his was presumably a *khalsa khoti* holding.

[352] [579] He took us to some stools in a corner in front of a small wooden table and asked us to sit down and take some tea. While waiting, using the Thakur as interpreter, I learned that Sönam was married to a young girl aged seventeen, who was also the wife of his two brothers. The ages of the latter, I was surprised to hear, were eight and ten respectively. His mother was still alive, and lived in the same house with them all.

It was not the mother, however, who came along with the tea. The young wife did this, and my notes have a description of the finery that she wore and the jewels that she had on. Sönam said that he, and not his parents, had chosen her. She was from a neighbouring village, and had come to live with her husbands in Kyelang. I asked if I could photograph the family, and on receiving permission to do so, asked for the younger husbands to be included. They posed unabashed but the elder boy and his bride looked shy. The Thakur said that this was because husband and wife should not really be seen very much together in public. 595

Further questioning elucidated that property of the household was common to the family, the mother and her three sons having inherited the land and house from the deceased husband. By marrying one wife, the brothers avoided partition and jointly shared their estate, their wife, and the children they might have. Asked if the younger brothers could marry another woman if they wished, the Thakur assured me that they could; he said that they could also bring her home, if the others agreed to it, and have her living with them in the common house. In my notes I have written: "Thus polygyny and polyandry are united under one roof, the first marriage of the three brothers to one wife not being dissolved when a new wife is brought home." [428]

The following day, June 22nd, the Wazir took me to some other households in the town. The first one, called Mion Zukshi, was polygynous and polyandrous as theoretically described above. Four brothers lived with two wives, without dividing their belongings and apparently in complete harmony. I did not know enough at the time to investigate the relations of these people, but I did gather one wife had been the spouse of all four brothers first, until the third one had gone out and brought himself another girl back, with the consent of his brothers.

In the next household, called Ralwa Karpa, one man was married to three women. Unfortunately my notes do not give any details and I am mentioning it here only as a indication that polygyny does exist in the valley of Lahul as, in fact, it exists everywhere else in areas of Tibetan culture.

The third household was the main one from which the previous one had broken away (*Ralwa*, it seems, means "cleft" locally). It consisted of two men living together undivided property with a wife each. The particularity of this family was, however, that both brothers had been married first to one of the women, until the older man had brought in a new wife. The first woman then became exclusively the wife of the younger brother. I made a rough sort of genealogy (the first I ever did) which I give opposite (Table 26). 1/A 595 601

From this genealogy I learned that polyandry earlier on had been much more pronounced. Tsering Tashi and Dön-drup had two elder

1/A [See category 116, p. 317 -- Analyst]

595 601 brothers called Tseten and Tashi Norbu, who had originally been married together with them to a common wife. With her they had had one son, Chömpel, an albino, now about 18 years old. He still lived in the Karpa house, groping about like a blind man in the daylight, as I was to see on another occasion. With the death of their common wife, the two elder men went each their own way, and married into other families, as shown in the genealogy. The two younger men remained in sole possession of the Karpa house and were remarried polyandrously to a new wife. It was after Tsering Tashi had brought back a wife for himself from a trip to another part of Lahul that this formerly common wife became exclusively that of the younger man, Dön-drup, as described above. Was this state of affairs in this household a sign that polyandry was breaking up in Lahul? I wondered at the time, and questioned the Thakur on this point during the conversation.

595 [594] When we entered the Karpa house, the wife of Dön-drup (who had formerly been both his and his elder brother's common wife) sprinkled tea with a branch of juniper on the floor ahead of us as a gesture of welcome. [788] Thakur Partap Chand thanked her with folded hands and recited some *mantra* (religious formula) before stepping onto the wet places.

595 162 [795] To my question as to how many were polyandrous in the valley of Lahul, the Wazir replied that forty households out of a total of sixty, in Kyelang alone, practised polyandry. And this included Christian families too, he said, who, of course, were not polyandrous. In the capital at least, there was thus a proportion of three to one who lived in polyandry, and there appeared to be every reason to believe that this same figure held good for the whole area in which Lahulis of Tibetan cultural affinity were to be found. Consequently there seemed to be no grounds for believing that polyandry was breaking up.

595 178 Asked about signalling at the door when one of the husbands was occupied with the common wife, the Thakur told me that this used to be done in "ancient days", when the man left his hat or his beads at the door to show that he was inside. It was not done any longer, he assured me.

595 428 I enquired what a *mag-pa* was, since that was a word that was used to denote the status taken by the two elder brothers who, some time back, had married into other houses at the death of the first common wife whom they all shared. I received a rather confused explanation at the time which I did not very well undertsand, and it was only a few days later, when talking with the Reverend F. A. Peter, that it was

Lahul

made clear to me exactly what was meant by this name (on the 25th June, 1938). 575 428

Lahulis, the Moravian missionary told me, are very keen not to divide up their property and anxious, also, not to let their family name die out. [182] In order to attain these two objectives, they practise polyandry and both patrilineal and matrilineal inheritance, the latter type, however, only in the case of there being no male heir, so that a generation in which there are only girls may be bridged over.

He compared the Lahuli household to a pivot around which all the interests of the family revolved. Polyandry was practised because in this way a number of brothers living on a family property could keep it undivided by taking one wife in common and sharing her, the land and the children between themselves. Usually inheritance was patrilineal, boys inheriting jointly and without division from their fathers, and then marrying polyandrously as the latter had done, and so on and so on through the future generations.

Matrilineal succession was resorted to when there was no male heir or heirs. In that case, if there were more than one girl, the eldest became the heiress, while the others were married off into other families, usually polyandrously, to brothers. In the case of one female heir, she, like the eldest of many daughters, inherited the whole property from her parents, undivided, and then was free to take as many husbands as she wished with whom to procreate offspring for the household. If she had boys, they inherited as described above; if she in turn only had girls, the same procedure as that which had been followed in her own case was again made use of.

The first type of marriage, the Reverend Peter said, that in which the sons of a Lahuli family took one wife in common, was the most widespread and was called a *bag-ma* marriage (*Bag-ma*, meaning "bride" in Tibetan). It was patrilocal and patrilineal. The other type of marriage, the one in which a daughter inherited all the property alone and took as many husbands as she wished, was more exceptional. Its name was [601] a *mag-pa* marriage (from *Mag-pa*, "son in law" or "bridegroom" in Tibetan), an appellation by which the woman's husband or husbands were also known in that case (see genealogy of the Karpa family in which this term is used).

My informant told me that in Leh, Ladak, he had known a woman with three *mag-pas*, all unrelated, so that this is a form of non-fraternal polyandry. He said that the younger brothers of a *mag-pa* do not have access to his wife, as it is he who has married into her household and

595 he belongs to her, not she to him, as she would in the regular, fraternal
428 polyandry of the *bag-ma* marriage. The heiress's children take her name,
and her bridegroom is really nothing more than the man she has chosen
to enable her to have the children she needs to hand down the property
[586] she has inherited undivided. A *mag-pa* or *mag-pas* can be turned out
by their wife without her having any obligation to compensate them; in
such cases, the woman does, however, usually give the poor man a sheep
or a few rupees as a parting present. Even if there are children of the
union, the *mag-pa* or *mag-pas* can be dismissed, it being considered
that he or they have fulfilled their mission and are no longer of any
use. Offspring remain with the house, namely in this case, with the
mother.

428 In the rare cases where there are no direct heirs, male or female,
597 household property and family name go to the most closely related
member of some related branch, with a preference for the paternal side
if possible. But usually even this is avoided by the adoption of an heir,
such being the preoccupation of the Lahulis with keeping the property
undivided and with handing down the family name.

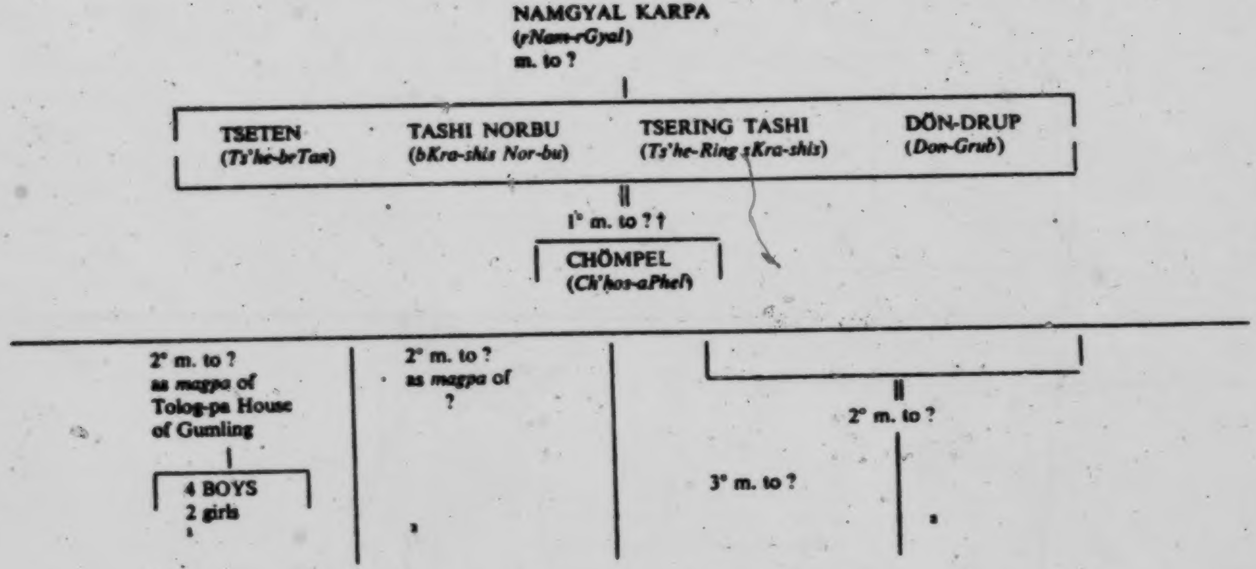
585 On the 1st July 1938, Wazir Thakur Partap Chand took me to Gumling
[595] village to see a *bag-ma* wedding in the Tolag-pa house. It will be
seen in the genealogy of the Karpa house given in Table 26, that Tseten,
[601] eldest of the four sons of Namgyal Karpa, after having been part of a
polyandrous marriage with his three brothers, left them when their common
wife died to become a *mag-pa* in the Tolag-pa House of Gumling.
He had had four boys and two girls, and it was to the wedding of these
four sons of Tseten that my wife and I were now invited.

On arrival at the house, Tseten received us, flanked by a young woman
[273] beautifully dressed in coloured silks with a white scarf over her
shoulders and a magnificent turquoise crown on her head, who immediately
offered us *chang* (local barley beer) to drink, in spite of the early
hour (it was seven a.m.). All the way from Kyelang to Gumling, only
[564] half an hour's ride, we had been preceded by a member of the smith
[533] caste, a Gara, who drummed away loudly on a kettle-shaped instrument
to do us honour and announce our arrival. He now stopped beating it
and went into the house with us to join others like himself who, today,
on this festive occasion, constituted the band.

With the Wazir, we were taken up to a guest room where we were
invited to sit cross-legged on the floor and plied with tea and more
chang. Once we had been through this ritual of polite reception, we
were taken up onto the roof of the house where a carpet had been put

[Text Continues on P. 318]

TABLE 26. HOUSE OF KARPA.


NAMGYAL KARPA
(*rNam-rGyal*)
m. to ?
TSETEN
(*Ts'he-brTan*)
TASHI NORBU
(*bKra-shis Nor-bu*)
TSERING TASHI
(*Ts'he-Ring sKra-shis*)
DÖN-DRUP
(*Don-Grub*)
1° m. to ? †
CHÖMPEL
(*Ch'hos-aPhel*)
2° m. to ?
as *magpa* of
Tolog-pa House
of Gumling
4 BOYS
2 girls
1
2° m. to ?
as *magpa* of
?
2
2° m. to ?
3° m. to ?
3

1 House of Tolag-pa of Gumling.
2 House of the family into which Tashi Norbu was married as *magpa*.
3 House of Karpa continued by Tsering Tashi and Dön-drup.

Males in Capital letters
Females in small lettering
m. = married
† = dead

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Lahul

595
601

Lahul

585 on the floor in a deep niche for us to sit upon. Other guests, native, were already there, and they greeted us politely as we sat down.

We had hardly been there a few minutes, when the bridal procession was heard arriving. Two drumming Garas preceded it, and they were followed by the bride herself, completely trussed up in a white sheet and carried bodily on the back of a man. These two were followed in turn by a crowd of women led by three young men whom I heard are called *nya-opa* (*gNya-ao-pa*) meaning "witness". They had flowers and bits of straw in their hats and wore colourful clothes. It seemed that three of them (including the man carrying the bride) had always to be related to the bridegroom, while the two others need only be of his village.

All these people had been to fetch the bride from her home, and they [583] had done it in the traditional way, which was to steal her. She had been surprised in the fields while she was at work, covered by the sheet in which she was now wrapped, and carried away by one of the *nya-opa*, the *Na-tri-pa* (*sNa-aK'hrid-pa*), literally "the one who conducts (the bride) by the nose". She put up a show of resistance and, as she arrived near the house in which we waited, she was crying out and bemoaning her fate in truly traditional way. This is compulsory, it appears, in order to give the impression that the girl is modest and respectable, unwilling to leave her parents and be married off to some strange man (or men). Should she walk of her own accord to her future hunsbands' house, for instance, it would be considered the height of indecency, giving the impression that she wanted to leave her old home and go to that of her betrothed.

The white bundle which was the bride was deposited in the yard of the house at the feet of a woman standing there. Upon enquiry, I heard that the latter was a relative of the bridegrooms, and now had a role to play. Sure enough, as soon as the bride touched the ground, the woman sat down beside her, and the new arrival collapsed ceremoniously across her knees, continuing to wail and to cry out in a perfect performance. The Gara drummers settled down opposite, on the other side of the yard, and continued to beat their instruments as loudly as they could, as if they wanted to drown the laments of the wailing bride.

585 789 Three lamas from the local monastery then came out of the house. The first one carried a stone slab with three little figures kneaded out of *tsampa* (*Tsam-pa*) (barley flour) on it, one of them with a lighted candle in front of it and another with a little pillar, also made of *tsampa*, standing before it. These were called *tsa-sum* (*Ts'ha-gSum*), and were

figures connected with getting rid of evil spirits. The second monk carried a *drilbu* (*dril-bu*) or bell, and a *dorje* (*rDorJe*) or *vajra* thunderbolt, those ubiquitous instruments of Tibetan lamaist ritual. The third one carried a plate full of glowing charcoal embers. 585 789

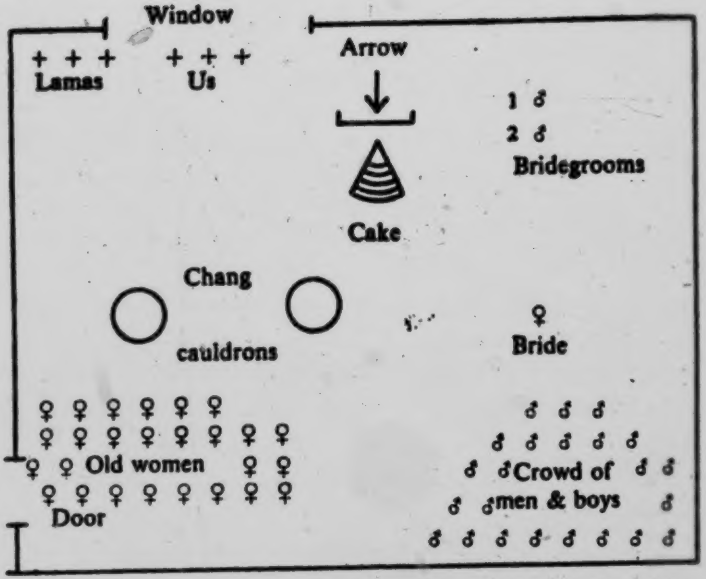
On reaching the sobbing bride and the woman over whose knee she was bent, the priests lit the candle of the *tsa-sum* and dropped powdered incense onto the burning coals. The plate containing these, now smoking copiously, was placed below the girl's dress so as to fumigate her from below of any evil that she might have brought with her. The *tsa-sum* was passed repeatedly and slowly over her, clockwise, to the accompaniment of muttered prayers, and then thrown away over a nearby hedge with much whistling and shouting from the onlookers and even the sound of a shot being fired somewhere close to the house. Thakur Partap Chand explained that the *tsa-sum*, loaded with the evil which the girl had brought with her and which had been chased out of her by the fumes and smoke from the charcoal, had now been thrown away; a gun had been fired to kill the devils who were trying to escape, while the object of the shouting and whistling by the onlookers was to frighten away those devils who had not been hit.

Once all this was finished, the *Nya-opa* put shoes on the bride, who had arrived without any. She struggled and protested against this action, saying, as she traditionally should, that she did not want them. Ornaments were next placed on her while she made further protests, refusing to change her posture which was still that of lying prostrate over her woman companion's knee. The girl in the elaborate dress who had offered us *chang* when we arrived, then came out and gave a drink of the beer to each of the men. She poured it into their palms, from which they drank, and then went over to the bride to do the same. I was surprised to see the latter lap it up without making any fuss. 585 [273]

After this, the *Na-tri-pa* picked the bride up again and carried her into the house. As I wanted to see what was going to happen now, we left the roof from where we had been watching up to this point, and climbed down the steps to the main room, on the ground floor of the house, into which the bundle which still constituted the bride was being carried. We got there just a few seconds ahead of her, and sat down quickly at the far end in front of the window, next to the three lamas who had also settled down. Sketch 1, below, is a rough plan of our respective positions.

To our left, two of the bridegrooms, seated cross-legged on the floor, awaited their future spouse. A couple of them sufficed, it seemed, the

585



Sketch 1. Plan of main room of Tolag-pa House of Gumling during the polyandrous wedding there on the 1st July, 1938.

other two being very young and fidgety and incapable of behaving as they should at their wedding. The eldest of the brothers was on the [292] right and he wore a yellow silk gown with a bright green sash diagonally across it, a charm box round his neck and a little Lahuli embroidered hat on his head. His brother was plainly dressed in everyday clothes and was seated on his left.

In front of the eldest brother, in a square box full of grain, stood a [782] tall arrow with prayer flags attached to the head. Next to it, and in front of the second bridegroom, there was a conical cake of *tsampa* with the small figure of a goat fashioned out of butter at the top. In the centre of the room were two huge cauldrons of *chang*, enough to keep the party going for quite some time. The back of the room, facing us, was full of people, many old women on our right, and a mixed group of men and boys just opposite.

The bride was brought in and dumped near the younger brother, to his left. She remained lying there without moving, still gently moaning [354] but having given up her violent protests. The room was in darkness when she was carried in, but no sooner had she been put down on the

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Lahul

floor, than small lamps on every pillar in the room were lit and gave us 585
all the light we needed to follow the next part of the ceremony. 354

A man called the *La-btag-pa* (*La-bTag-pa*) now came forward with 585
a large branch of juniper in his hand. He set fire to it from one of the 782
lamps and with a knife, which he held in the other hand, he cut a piece out of the conical *tsampa* cake and offered it loudly to a god whom he called Tangyer of Kior. The Wazir told me afterwards that the latter was the name of a neighbouring village really called Piukar, while the god's actual appellation was Kularapa. It was never done, however, to call upon him and his village openly by their real name, and thus they were both called upon in the way which I heard.

The same *La-btag-pa* then took what remained of the cake and offer- 585
ed it to the bride and bridegrooms. A shout went up from the crowd 787
looking on and we heard that this was the crucial moment when they became husbands and wife. The cake was presented cross-armed by the officiator, that is to say, after he had got rid of the burning juniper branch (which was thrown out of the window), he took one large slice in each hand and, facing the wedding party, offered what he had in his right hand to the men, and the contents of the left to the girl. Everybody watched to see how the pieces would be taken. If they are snatched, it means that the partners are very much in love. If the woman takes her piece slowly, reluctantly, it means that she is in love with someone else. Should the cake be refused and the slices returned, this means that the marriage is refused. In this case, they seemed to accept the proffered food quite naturally, without either snatching or hesitating, so that everyone present shouted their approval.

After that, *chang* was passed to the assembled company, beginning 585
with the two bridegrooms. When it reached us, the Thakur told me that [273]
the ceremony was finished and that we could go. As we went out, leaving our guide to remain and enjoy the fun, I noticed that the Garas started beating their drums again; they had been silent since the bride had been carried into the main room to be formally wed. We were cordially invited to return the next day, as we were told that rejoicings would go on now for another two days and two nights.

In the morning, on July 2nd 1938, we returned to Tolag-pa house, to continue our experience of a Lahuli polyandrous wedding. Thakur Partap Chand again accompanied us, and from him I heard what had happened after our departure the day before, and during the night.

It seemed that the bride had retired at about 11.30 p.m., with the women who helped her to undress. The bridegrooms remained with the

Lahul

585 men for another half hour and, on the stroke of midnight, they went up to the bridal chamber where the eldest brother was put to bed in another bed than the one in which his bride was already lying. This is the usual custom, I was assured, when the couple is not notoriously in love, and parents have arranged the match. They could sleep in the same bed together if it were otherwise. An old woman was left in the room all night to watch over them and see how they behaved, and this appeared to be an indication that the young people had, nevertheless, had a word to say in the choice of whom they would marry, because if they had not and the parents alone had arranged everything, two men and two women would have been on guard all night.

Thakur Partap Chand assured me that newly married couples never consummate the marriage on the first night; they only have physical relations with one another on their wedding day if they have had some before. Intercourse between husband and wife may not take place until a week later, I heard (I must say with some incredulity), or sometimes until after a month or even one year. The only explanation that I could find for such a curious statement was that perhaps in the case of arranged marriages, the partners are not keen to know each other, and postpone this duty as long as they can. But I cannot believe that so much delay is observed in the case of newly married couples who have voluntarily chosen each other.

In the early morning, the women fetched the bride out and, having dressed her in all her finery, brought her down to the main room again. The bridegroom and his brother were likewise taken down, adorned in their best clothes by their male friends and relatives. We found them sitting in state in the reception room where they had been seated during the wedding, but with the bride now relaxed and upright, and all the other paraphernalia removed – except the *chang* cauldrons.

[293] From the latter, an ample supply was served to the guests, together with tea. We were continually being pressed to drink, and after sipping our cups a few times, got tired of it and left the room. I took advantage of this to question the Thakur as to who the other people in the room were. He told me that they were relatives and friends of the bridegrooms' family. The bride was not represented, he assured me, because it was very rare that members of the bride's family should attend her wedding, never if they did not approve of the match. If their consent [584] has been obtained, they must first receive some assurance that their daughter will receive enough revenue from the land of her future husbands to satisfy them before they consent to appear. They will then do

Lahul

so, but always two days later, and when they make their appearance, 585
everyone on the bridegrooms' side is very polite to them, for they protest
against the violent way in which their daughter has been abducted, in
accordance with the best traditions.

We went off to lunch after that, and on returning in the afternoon, 585
visited the private chapel of the house, the *lha-k'hang* (*lha-k'hang*), 782
where the three lamas were busy preparing offerings which still had to
be made to the gods so that the wedding should be auspicious. They
had consulted the scriptures, they told us, and the things which we could
see on the altar were those that they considered appropriate for this occasion.
Before a large statue of Buddha, together with the usual presentations
of water, grain and *tsampa* moulded *tormas* (*gTor-ma*) or dough
figures, there were a leg of mutton, the arrow with the streamers to it,
standing in a box of grain, which we had seen in front of the senior
bridegroom at the ceremony of the previous day, and a platter upon
which stood the large figure of a stag also moulded in dough, with
twelve points to its antlers, surrounded by small, coloured flags and two
dos (*mDos*) or string-cross traps for evil spirits. The lamas were most
obliging and pleasant, and although we interrupted their devotions, took
great pains to show us everything. They told us that the stag would be [789]
thrown away and burned before the wedding festivities had come to
an end.

Next, we went up onto the roof again, attracted there by various 585
curious visitors from Tibet who had stopped off on their way south to 273
see what was going on in the Tolag-pa house. There we found a space
filled with a lot of men from the party, sitting round the wall, while in
the centre, before them, huge cauldrons of *chang* were being prepared.
Upon asking, I was given to understand that the bride was shortly coming
up to give flowers to each of the men in exchange for small coins
which they would give her for good luck. The *chang*-girl, whom we
knew from the first day, was there distributing the alcoholic beverage
to all in turn, still dressed in all her finery. Below this space on the roof,
I heard that there was another room for tea drinkers, and that a similar
ceremony would take place there, too.

The bride did come up soon after that, and she duly distributed flowers
and received money in exchange. Everybody then got very drunk [789]
on the *chang* until the lamas came out with the stag offering and threw
it away into a specially built bonfire below the house, while everyone
hissed loudly at the devils which were being thus destroyed. Dancing
followed, the men nearly all reeling drunk, but then I was told that for

585 a marriage to be auspicious, it was essential that as many of the guests
273 as possible became intoxicated.

Mutton, rice and curry were distributed to all, and while the dancing went on, many laid themselves down to sleep. The lamas came up onto the roof and recited prayers for all. More *chang* was distributed by the girl, and everyone drank six cups at least. Each time that this took place or somebody got up to dance, the Garas would beat their drums to encourage revelry. Occasionally, they even rattled off tunes, which I was told meant "drink more". The lamas who were also drinking quite a lot, became very religious in this atmosphere, and kept on springing to their feet to bless the guests, the food, the crops and even the sheep belonging to the house, and which could be seen in the fields below.

585 Only the women would not join in the dance and needed much persuasion. Prem Chand, the Thakur's cousin, joined me in trying to get them to perform, and when eventually the older ladies of the house of Karpa (among them Tseten's mother) started a few steps, they all came along and joined in the fun. It was getting late now, and the sun was setting. The bridegrooms wandered about freely in the crowd during all this time, as did even the two younger ones who had not taken part in the ceremony.

As we broke up and went home that evening, we heard that the bride was down stairs in the reception room with the other women of the house.
[591] In twelve days, she would be going back to her parents' house, where she would stay one month in accordance with Lahuli custom. She would only return to her new home after that time, bringing all her belongings with her and settling down for good in the house of her husbands.

We stayed another three weeks in Lahul, and during this time I had a number of opportunities to gather further data about the polyandrous
[115] people of the Bhaga valley. The Wazir, Thakur Partap Chand, accompanied me everywhere, and for this reason, as well as because he spoke English, he was my principal source of information.

Thus, Partap Chand told me that in *Khalsa kothi* holdings of poly-
423 androus families, property may belong to the house, that is, to the broth-
428 ers who own the land jointly and without division, but fields are never-
595 theless divided up among them, so that each of them receives his own private revenue. Bad patches are distributed first among the brothers of a household, and then the good pieces of land. Women can also re-
[584] ceive the revenue of fields put aside for them, and it is on this point that a bride's relatives have to be satisfied before they will agree to their daughter being "stolen" from them.

Lahul

In his own family, the Thakur told me that the rule of primogeniture 595
was observed. He, as his father's eldest son, inherited the entire *garhpan*, 428
and his younger brothers – known as *nono* (*No-no*) – were maintained by him as long as they lived with him. He denied that they practised polyandry in his caste (and I accepted his statement with the reservations which I have made earlier on), and assured me that younger brothers only remained at home as long as they did not marry. They did not have access to his wife, he said, and when they had found the girl of their choice, they received a small allotment upon which they had to maintain themselves and their family. Very quickly their descendants became like other landholders of a *jagir khoti*, and had to render services, or pay rent instead, to the Thakur.

Despite his denial that polyandry was practised by the Thakurs, the 595
Wazir was very informative as to how it functioned with others. Each brother, he said, had his own room in the family house, as did the wife too. Occasionally, she lived with the eldest brother, in his room. In winter, when it was cold, in order to save fuel, they all lived in one, heated room, without any privacy. Asked if houses communicated with 342
each other, my informant said that they did not, but that in winter, when 574
the snow lay deep on the ground and the streets were impassable, everyone went from house to house by way of the roofs. There were trap doors above to let oneself in when the main entrance was blocked up in front by snow. Winter lasted eight months, he said.

Asked what the rules were in Lahul for sharing the common wife in 595
a family, Partap Chand said that there were none. All brothers, he assured me, have an equal right to the woman, and access to her is very much a question of tacit and tactful understanding between the men. The old signalling method of leaving hat or beads at the door was definitely not resorted to any longer, and a capable wife was quite able to to put the weight of her influence into the balance by distributing her favours equally and fairly. Frequently, one brother remained at home, alone with the wife, while the others went off in turn on trading expeditions. Jealousy did sometimes arise, as was inevitable, and in such cases [578]
separation was nearly always the outcome of the situation. The family then had to divide up the property, and became less well off in consequence. For this reason, interest effectively checked the appearance of jealousy, as it was a luxury which could not very well be afforded by the ordinary Lahuli.

Children, "like the fields" as he put it, are the joint property of the [851]
house. No distinction is made as to who is the physiological father,

595 although sometimes he is known. It was true, the Thakur said, that
[851] when a family had no issue, a man from outside was called in in an
[842] attempt to sire a child for them. Such a man was called a *p'horjag* (*P'ho-rJag*) as in other parts of the Himalayas and in Tibet where the custom
was also followed. It was not particularly well looked upon in Lahul,
and was only rarely resorted to. Monogamous families seemed to favour it more than polyandrous ones, he added.

595 The care and upbringing of the children were also a joint concern, I
855 was told. It could not be said that any one parent, be it one of the
fathers or the mother, had a more important role to play in this respect
than the others. But of course, when children were very young, the
[854] mother looked after them more than the fathers. Later on, it was perhaps the brother with the greatest personality who played a prominent
part in the education of the children. On the whole, however, the men
seemed afraid of their sons, believing that if they treated them badly,
they themselves might suffer for it later on in life.

595 Young people often revolted against polyandry, but experience show-
428 ed that it was nevertheless still the best policy to follow. Fathers put
[626] pressure on their boys, when they rose in rebellion against the idea of
sharing a wife, by threatening to withold handing down the family property to them. This was generally quite sufficient to make the young men
change their minds.

595 In conclusion, summing up his views on polyandry, Thakur Partap
Chand said that the system worked pretty smoothly on the whole. There
[578] was little quarrelling and not much jealousy. The reason for which this
[182] matrimonial custom was practised was an economic one: the soil was
poor, the holdings small, and there was little possibility of acquiring
other arable land. Each family had to hang on to what it owned; partition was strenuously avoided.

601 I obtained a few kinship terms from the informant, but not as many as I was able to gather, later, in other areas of Tibetan culture. Those I obtained in Lahul, however, are of interest from a comparative point of view, because they are more archaic linguistically than those now in use in Tibet proper and show a persistance of old forms in these remote western valleys. Grandfather (both father's and mother's father) is *meme* (*Mes-mes*) in Lahul; grand uncles (paternal and maternal grandfather's brothers), *lamas* (*bLama*), and any old men are also called by this appellation. Grandmother (mother's and father's mother) is *api* (*Ap'hyi*), as are also maternal and paternal grand aunts, nuns, known as *chomos* (*Jo-mo*), and other old women.

The Lahuli term for father is *apa* (*Ap'ha*), and a distinction is made 601
between eldest father, *apa chembo* (*Ap'ha ch'hen-po*), middle father, 595
apa chung-ngan (*Ap'ha ch'hung-ngu*) or *apa panna* (probably an Indian term), and the youngest, *agu* (*A-gu*), by which term (which strictly means paternal uncle), all other younger brothers of the eldest fathers are called.

The mother is known as *ama* (*A-ma*). Husband and wife are both called *zhidmat* (*Zhid-sMat*) or *troks* (*Drogs*). A wife calls her eldest husband *ajo* (*A-jo*) or more respectively *ga-ga* (*Ga-ga*), and the younger ones *no* (*No*) or honorifically *ga-ga chung-ngan* (*Ga-ga ch'hung-ngu*). The eldest husband calls his wife *ache* (*A-ch'he*), (which is another word for sister); the oher husbands call her *nomo* (*No-mo*), while all of them, speaking of her to each other, refer to her as *ane* (*A-ne*) (which also has the meaning of aunt), or *zhidmat*. People outside the family will speak of the wife also as *zhidmat* and of the husbands as *go-bu* (*mGo-Bu*), for the eldest, *panna (*Indian?) for the middle one, and *t'ha-chung-ngan* (*mT'ha-ch'hung-ngu*) for the youngest.

In a polygynous household, the eldest wife goes by the name of *chan-chen* (*Byan-ch'hen*), the second one by that of *Chan-chung-ngan* (*Byan-ch'hung-ngu*), and the youngest is called *yang-chung-ngan* (*Yang-ch'hung-ngu*). Eldest boys, before they are married, are known as *gaga* (*Ga-ga*), and youngest as *no-no* (*No-no*). I have already said that a [842]
man called in to a family to produce children when the husbands have failed to do so with their common wife is called a *p'horjag*. Sometimes, a second man is also asked to assist if the first one fails, in which case he is called a *po-chung-ngan* (*P'ho-ch'hung-ngu*). Sons go by the name of *bu-tsa* (*Bu-ts'ha*), while daughters are called *bu-mo* (*Bu-mo*).

The Lahulis of Tibetan cultural affinity belong also to various patri- 614
lineal clans, each one descendant from a common ancestor. These are called *rü* (*Rus*), meaning "bone", and those belonging to them are known as *rü-pa* (*Rus-pa*). The Thakur gave me a list of some of the main ones, the name they bore, he said, being that of the ancestor. They are the following:

1. Guram Shing-pa (*Gur-ram Shing-pa*) or Jo (*Jo*), meaning "Sugar cane one" or "Lord", the clan to which he himself belonged. They were descendants, he told me, of the preserved semen of a Tibetan ascetic which had been fertilized on a piece of sugar cane.
2. Lön-chen-pa (*bLon-ch'hen-pa*), "Minister one".
3. Miru-pa (*Mi-rus-pa*), "Human bone one" or "Villager from Miru" (in Ladak).

614 4. Kyin-go-pa (*K'hyi-mGo-pa*), "Dog-headed one".
5. Ödsal-lha-pa (*aOd-gSal-lHa-pa*), "Luminous, clear god one".
6. Dzes-pa-pa (*mDzes-pa-pa*), "Lovely one".
7. Nyishara-pa (*Nyishar-ra-pa*), "Sunrise one".
8. Yige-pa (*Yige-pa*), "Letter one".
9. Gyan-shing-pa (*rGyan-shing-pa*), "Betting wood one".
10. Trang-tug-pa (*Grang-t'hug-pa*), "Cold soup one".
11. Tarrawa-pa (*Tar-ra-ba-pa*), "Buttermilk one".
12. Sumpo-pa (*gSum-p'ho-pa*), "Thrice male one".
13. Langtso-rü-pa (*Lang-ts'ho-rus-pa*), "Adolescent clan one".
14. Kyungo-pa (*K'hyung-mGo-pa*), "*Garuda* headed one" (the Garuda is the Hindu mythical bird).
15. Jamshar-pa (*aJam-shar-pa*), "Mild shining one".
16. Leh-pa (*sLa-pa*), "Man from Leh" (in Ladak).

Of these, numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 14 and 16 of course, are also to be found in Ladak, and the Lahuli clans of the same name are related to those in the neighbouring area of Kashmir.

[582] [626] Clan exogamy was the rule, the Wazir told me, and there were very few even today who dared to transgress this injunction. There had been a marriage within the Lönchen-pa clan, it seemed, but its members had found it very difficult to live down; they had been held up as objects of ridicule in the whole of Lahul ever since.

7. OTHER RELEVANT POINTS INVESTIGATED

114 Being keen to investigate the psychology of polyandrous people, I also sought, while in Lahul, to gather data which appeared to me could have a bearing on the psychological structure of the individuals involved. [115] Consequently I enquired from the Thakur about initiation ceremonies and paid a number of visits to medical men to question them on nervous ailments in their practices.

114 852 Thakur Partap Chand told me that when a son was born to a family, a special ceremony took place which my notes call phonetically *Gotsu* (probably *mGo-aDzug*, "beginning") in Tibetan. It should be remembered that at the time, I as yet knew no Tibetan and was forced to take down names and words as they appeared to sound to me – a process highly unreliable in that language as differences of meaning often depend on spelling and not on pronunciation. 852 When the boy is not yet twelve months old, on the day of the Tibetan New Year (usually in February), he is strapped onto his mother's back and taken up to the

Lahul

shrine of the local deity (*yül-lha,* (*Yul-lha*)), where she offers up some 852
chang. His father and three of his relatives have, in the meantime, car- [782]
ried a large pile of *tsampa* up to the same place, and they, too, present
it to the god as an offering. A lama will then draw the figure of a stag [789]
in the dust in front of the shrine, and will shoot at it with an arrow from
a bow he has brought. This is supposed to kill all evil which might
attack the child.

Next, when a boy is between four and five, his hair is ritually cut in 302
a ceremony which goes by the name of *Raldag* (probably *Ral-ltag*, "long 852
hair-neck hair"). After three days of feasting in which the whole family, [604]
their relatives and their friends take part, the child's maternal uncle
(*azhang* (*a-zhang*)) shears all his nephew's hair off and takes the locks
to each person present in turn. In exchange for looking at the hair, [431]
they each give a small piece of money to the parents as a lucky offering. [777]

The first doctor whom I saw was called Sönam Tashi (*bSod-Nams-* 158
bKra-shis) and he was a lama from a village called Bardgi. He informed [115]
me that there were quite a lot of nervous ailments in Lahul, the principal [759]
ones being epilepsy and hysteria. The first of these two appeared when [753]
the person was about fifteen years old, and he attributed the cause to
alcohol. He thought, too, that it might have some connection with the [164]
high incidence of venereal diseases to be found in the valley, infections
which he said had been introduced from Kulu. Hysteria often brought [833]
with it symptoms of frigidity in women and of impotence in men, and
he had a number of patients suffering in this way. As a cure for epi- 755
lepsy, he advocated beating with hot juniper branches. Hysteria was
better cured, he thought, by administering pills made of paper upon
which prayers had been written.

There was a Government Hospital at Kyelang, and on the 28th June 759
1938 I went there to interview its director, Dr. Bhagwan Singh. I asked [743]
him about Tibetan medicine, and who the local doctors were in Lahul. [115]
He told me that there were quite a number of them and that they went
by the name of *amchi* (*Am-ch'hi* or *Aem-ch'hi*). The best among them
was Katug (*Ka-bTug*) of Chelling, but there were also Tsering Norbu
(*Ts'he-ring Nor-bu*) of Billing, Dön-drup (*Don-Grub*) of Kardang, and
the old uncle of the Wazir, Thakur Mangal Chand, *amchi* of Kyelang,
whose Tibetan name was Tashi Dawa (*bKra-shis Zla-ba*). According to 757
Dr. Bhagwan Singh, ayurvedic medicine (although I think this was only
his way of naming Tibetan medicine as distinct from the Western sys-
tem) was practised, but extra to this, considerable use was made of
Tibetan medicinal herbs.

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Lahul

164 He told me that he treated the following diseases by Western methods:
757 venereal (by far the greatest incidence), skin trouble, round worm, epilepsy,
[177] hysteria (mostly in women, especially unmarried ones), paraplegia
and hemiplegia (due to syphilis), some cases of leprosy, eye inflammations
due to various causes, ear infections, tuberculosis (which was on
the increase due to winter promiscuity), but no cancer (at least observed).
595 I discussed polyandry with him in conjunction with his remarks
158 about the hysteria of unmarried women (who were numerous in
762 Lahul because of polyandry, he said) and the promiscuity of the winter
dwelling in one room, and he told me that he had had one case of
suicide; it was a *no* (younger brother) he told me, who had put an end
to his life because he was jealous of his brothers sharing the wife with
him. He was thirty seven years old at the time, and there was no doubt
that this jealousy was the actual reason for his fatal nervous affliction.

759 Since Thakur Mangal Chand was easily available in Kyelang, I next
[115] went to see him, on the 5th July 1938. An elderly man of over sixty,
he had for a long time been Lahul's Forest Officer, but in his old age
had turned to medicine and had become quite proficient in it and well
known under his Tibetan name of Tashi Dawa. He told me that Tibetan
[759] medicine was ayurvedic to some extent, since it was the result of a
translation of the Indian texts by Tibetan doctors acting on the orders
of King Srong Tsän Gampo (*Srong-bTsan-sGam-po*) in the 7th century
158 A.D. Asked if there was much nervous disease in Lahul, he replied
759 that there was little. Light cases were treated by lama Sönam Tashi
whom I had interviewed earlier on, while serious ones came to him.
There were relatively more women ill in this manner than men, and
hysteria was quite prevalent among them. He could, however, quote
some cases of men, too.

Thus there was the case of a lama in Kardang, married polyandrously
158 to a single, common wife with his two elder brothers. As long as they
595 were alive, he was very jealous of them, as he wanted the woman all
578 to himself. He developed a nervous paralysis of the leg which lasted as
long as his brothers lived. They died, however, one after the other, so
that in the end he was left with the wife alone. From that day onwards,
he was cured; his paralysis disappeared and he was able to walk again.

He knew also of another case of an elder brother in the upper part of the Bhaga valley who was hysterically nervous, as he put it, because he could not stand the idea of sharing his wife with his younger brothers. Apparently, everybody in Lahul was not capable of living in polyandry and adapting himself to this form of matrimony.

There were a few instances of frigidity and impotence, Tashi Dawa said. He treated these with aphrodisiacs and they gave him no more trouble after that. The medicine used in such cases was the juice of the Japutsitsi plant, popularly called Gege of Wangla, (I was not able to identify this plant botanically and therefore cannot give its Latin name). 757 833 [832]

I met Thakur Mangal Chand, alias Tashi Dawa again, upon other occasions, and was treated to long discourses on Tibetan medicine. The data, which I noted at the time appears to be irrelevant to the question of polyandry, however, apart from the interesting cases mentioned above, so I shall abstain from giving a fuller account of it here. It is nevertheless perhaps worth mentioning that I heard from the *amchi* that abortion was practised on unmarried women and even on married ones in certain circumstances (when it was too apparent that conception was not due to relations with a husband). To bring about the required results, he made use of a mixture of horse-blood, red soot called *tsot*(?), musk and bee's wax. 115 847 [837]

On another occasion, I was interested to hear from a *gelong* (*dGe-sLong*), or high ordained lamaist priest, called Dön-drup, whom I met on the 27th of June, 1938, in the village of Billing near Kyelang, of the way in which sex plays a role in reincarnation. When a soul is searching for a womb in which to be conceived for rebirth, should the woman eventually chosen love her husband, it is sure that the new earthly form taken will be female. If, on the contrary, the woman does not love her husband, a boy will be born. 775 842

This statement was strangely reminiscent of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* by W. Y. Evans-Wentz (Third Edition, 1957), in which it is said that if the deceased, who is to be reborn, is about become a male, an intense feeling of aversion for the father and of attraction for the mother comes upon him, or vice-versa as regards birth as a female.

B. POLYANDRY IN RUPCHU *(RUP-CH'HU)* AND LADAK *(LA-DWAGS)*

1. RUPCHU

On the way between Lahul and the Rupchu plateau, I encountered many people on the road, mainly in the evening when we reached camping places. These people varied between Tibetan nomads moving south with goods to sell, Lahulis visiting Kulu or returning from there, and Tibetan pilgrims on their way to and from the holy Buddhist places in the Indian plains. 484 [439]

000 the Indian plains. I also came across the first tent-dwelling nomads,
342 miserable people living in their black yak-hair tents, the latter standing
563 like spiders because of their strange construction in which the supporting poles and sticks are placed outside instead of inside the cloth.

361 When I arrived at our destination, I was taken into camp by the *goba* and his nephew (see Appendix 1, Narrative of journeys). There I found
[233] some more black Tibetan tents, in among flocks of sheep and herds of
[563] yaks (*gYag*), animals from which our hosts made their living. I put up our tent next to the largest tent of all, which was that of the *goba*.

[133] The camp was situated on a large, flat expanse of grass, surrounded by snow-clad hills, and the altitude was 14,500 feet. The plateau came to an abrupt end to the east and, beyond it, I could see the vast expanse of the brackish waters of Tso Moriri which is fifteen miles long. I was
[792] not able to see the monastery from where I was because it was hidden by a fold in the ground; it stood on the edge of the lake below, beneath the sudden overhang of the high plateau above. There was a large white *chöten* at this spot which gave the direction in which the *gompa* lay.

792 This monastery, called Korzok gompa (*dKor-rDzogs dGon-pa*) is one of the highest anywhere on the Tibetan plateau. It derives its livelihood
[441] from the revenue which it acquires from the summer visits of nomads
[243] from Tibet, from subsidies which it receives from the monasteries upon which it is dependant in Bhutan (for it belongs to the Drug-pa or Kagyut-pa sect, like those in Lahul), from the commercial activities of its abbot and monks who all indulge in trade, and from its agricultural efforts which, as I saw with astonishment, consist in growing barley, in spite of the altitude, and harvesting it during the short summer season from June to the middle of August.

The chief lama, a *tulku* (*sPrul-sKu*) or Incarnation, whom I had met on the way up to the Rupchu plateau, is called Lang-na Rimpoche (*gLang sNa Rin-po-ch'he*), meaning "Precious Elephant Trunk". He exerts considerable religious influence on the nomadic population which congregates every summer round his residence, and, at that time, he and the *goba* were actually the most important people in the area.

563 The nomads are called in Tibetan either Chang-pa (*Byang-pa*) be-
[101] cause they inhabit the high northern plains, the Chang T'hang (*Byang-T'hang*), or Drok-pa (*aBrog-pa*) meaning "pastoral ones". Those whom I saw at Korzok normally live in the lower province of Tibet proper, Ngari Korsum, just north of where we were. During the summer, they
[631] come up to Kashmir to graze their flocks and herds, and here enter into
[651] contact with the men from Lahul. Their animals belong to the *goba*

Tibetan Nomads

(then a relative of the Thakurs, for whom he was certainly acting), and 563
to him they deliver 70% of their produce, while being allowed to retain 631
about 30%. They also sell salt and borax to the local people at the 651
Patseo fair, as described earlier (p. 310), the wool and *pashmina* which [439]
they bring down, together with the butter, cheese, hides and yak hair which are among the products which they must deliver to the owner of their animals, the *goba*.

The *goba*, as far as I could make out, was not normally resident with 563
them, but lived the rest of the year in Lahul. He was a relative of the 631
Karpa family as well as of the Thakurs. He spoke of the tent dwellers as "his nomads", and I realised that he was their master and the owner of the animals, beyond any possibility of misunderstanding. The rela-
tions of the nomads to him were those of servants, or even serfs, and [576]
they never approached him otherwise than with their tongues out (a Tibetan sign of respect), bowing from the waist and sucking air in through their mouths as they spoke. It did not appear that he had any of the powers of governmental authority over them which one would have presumed he might have in so isolated a spot, even if it were in Kashmir territory. I was, however, able to gather that, as these nomads moved freely over the border, they were politically subject to both the Kashmir authorities and those of central Tibet. The latter were represented in Ngari Korsum by the Garpön of Gartok, capital of the neighbouring Tibetan province.

The dress of the people up here was no longer the same, and already 291
bore a much closer resemblance to that of the Ladakis whom I was 563
soon to encounter. The men wore a loose-fitting robe of Chinese cut, with a sash round the waist made either of coloured or white wool, as in Lahul; on their heads they wore the Ladaki hat, that is a velvet cap, round and high in shape, with the sides turned up in front over the ears. The headgear of the women was the *perak* or *beraq* (possibly spelt *Be-rag*), a long piece of red felt studded with turquoises received in heirloom, which is worn hanging from the forehead backwards down to the waist and is framed at its pointed end over the eyes by two enormous black woollen "ears" on either side of the head. The women's gowns were similar to those of the men and were also made of wool, but usually of a darker colour. Over their shoulders, they fastened a goat's skin, with the fur on the outside. Both sexes wore heavy woollen Tibetan boots, with red embroideries over the foot.

Although no actual example could be given to me at the time, I was 595
assured by our hosts that polyandry existed among the nomads exactly 563

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Tibetan Nomads

595 563 as it did among all Tibetans, that is also among the sedentary population. Since many authors have denied the existence of polyandry among nomads in Tibet, while others have stated that it does exist, the pronouncement was of interest to me.

I asked whether the few animals which the nomads did own themselves were held in common in one family unit, as the land was in Lahul. Although I had expected an affirmative answer to this question, the one that I received was in the negative. Why then did nomads live in polyandry? I enquired what the incentive might be, since there did not appear to be an economic one. The reply given was that it was a Tibetan custom which everyone in Tibet had always practised. Against this, I argued that by dividing up the family into as many units as there were sons to marry, each with his wife and children, since property was already individual, it would be possible to increase the livestock and raise the standard of living among nomads. This, however, did not seem to impress my informants, the abbot and the *goba*, at all; they simply repeated that nomads were Tibetans like others and therefore followed the customs of their country.

I have thus come to the conclusion that the nomads of Tibet practise polyandry exactly as the sedentary population does, out of social conformity. Being Tibetans, they often combine other forms of marriage with polyandry as well and, while I was in Rupchu, I heard about a prominent case of polygyny which, it seemed, had attracted a certain amount of attention, even in this society.

A man named Sönam Murup (*bSod-Nams dNgos-Grub*), unfortunately absent at the time of my visit, was the *mag-pa* husband of a young woman whose two other sisters were married out in *bag-ma*. These, however, had divorced and returned home to their sister, and from that moment had become the junior wives of Sönam Murup. No marriage ceremony had been performed so that they were free to leave again and to remarry, but in the meantime, the children that they had had with the *mag-pa* were considered as those of the family of his first wife.

114 It was at Korzok *gompa* that I was given details about the polyandry practised by the Lhasa officials in Ngari Korsum province, and particularly about the way in which the Gar-pön and his son lived together with a common wife. I shall not go into this here, however, but will hold it in reserve for the division dealing particularly with this subject, as part of the description of the polyandry that is practised in Tibet proper.

2. LADAK

a) *Preliminary Description*

I would like to begin with a brief description of Ladak and of Leh, the COO
setting in which my research work was carried out, before accounting
for the polyandry of this region.

1. *Environment*

Ladak (often spelt Ladak*h* in English, from the Hindi, whereas in 131
Tibetan it is *La-Dwags*),[1] is really the most westerly part of the high [101]
plateau of Tibet, today included in Kashmir as a *tehsil* or administrative
sub-division of that state (see Map 5). It is limited in the north by the
Karakorum mountains and the Kara Tagh, which are westerly continuations of the Kwen Lun mountains of northern Tibet; in the south, by an artificial frontier drawn along the foot of the Zangskar and main Himalayan ranges; in the east, by an equally unnatural boundary with Tibet which runs from the Karatagh south-west of the Lingzi T'hang (plain) to the Pangkong Tso, and from there, south-east, to the upper Indus valley; in the west, by the other Kashmir sub-divisions of Zangskar and Baltistan.

The area covered by the sub-division is 82,000 square miles, of which [311]
only 47,762 are cultivated. It is one of the most elevated regions of the 133
earth, the inhabited part ranging from 9,000 feet to 14,000 feet, and
even more in Rupchu, as we have just seen. It is traversed from the
south-east to the north-west by the Indus river, and in the north-western
part another large watercourse takes its source, the Shyok river, into
which runs the Nubra. It is these valleys which constitute the fertile [311]
areas where habitation is possible, agriculture fed from river and glacier [361]
water being the mainstay of the village.

As in Lahul, and even more so here, because of the altitude every- 132
where, the climate is a cold one for the greater part of the year, only
the brilliant tropical sun of India bringing some warmth during the day
in the summer months. The rainfall is scanty but, during the winter, an
appreciable amount of snow does fall. Temperatures in the inhabited
parts of Ladak, that is at a mean altitude of 11,000 feet, vary between
a maximum of 62° and a minimum of 23°, on average.

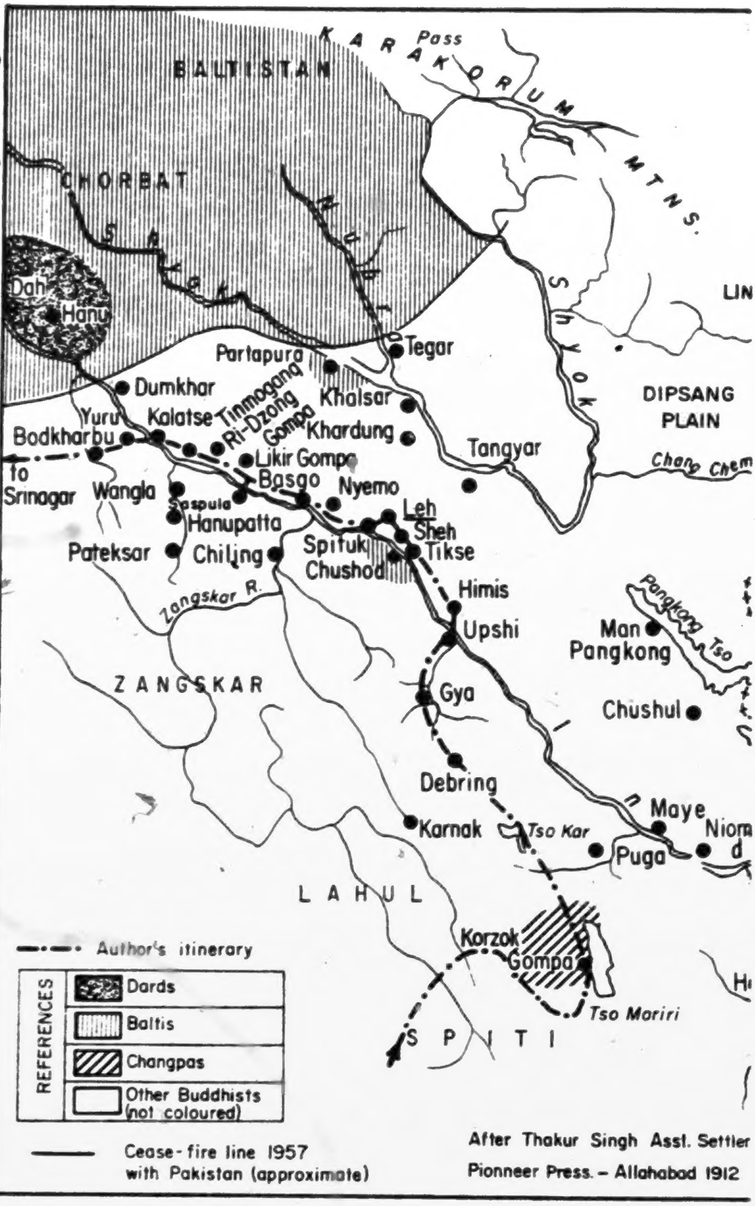
Trade routes through Ladak are important, and there are three prin- COO

---

[1] Another Tibetan name for Ladak is *Mar-yul (dMar-yul)*, the "red country".

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4

102
103
131
133
563



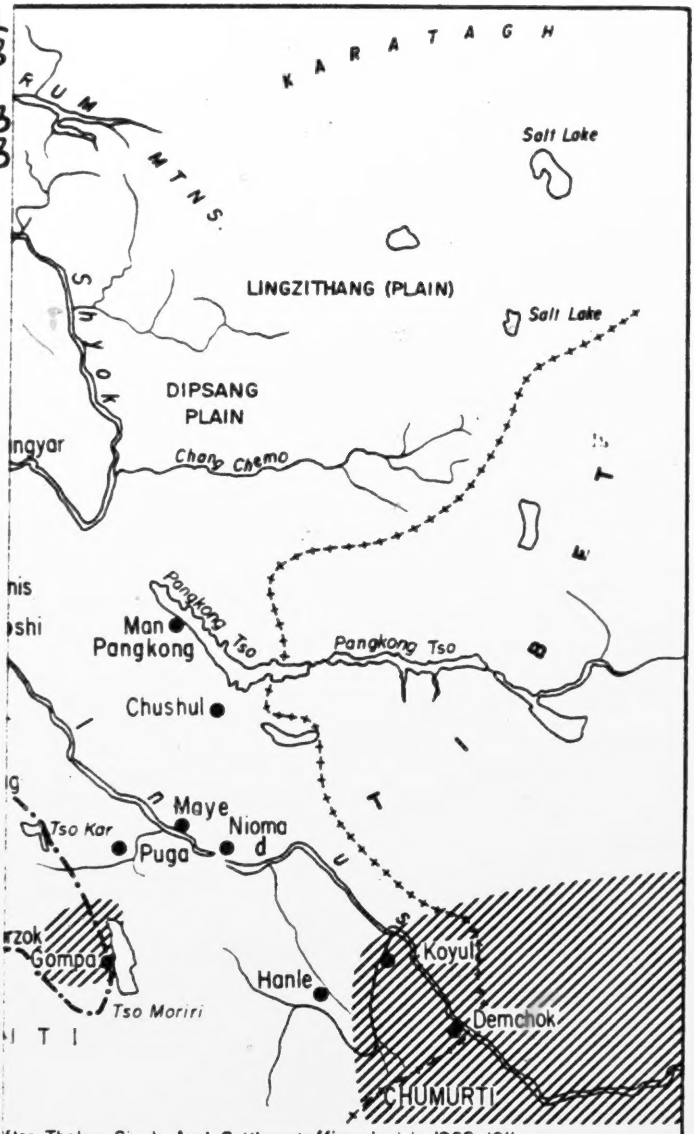
KARAKORUM MTNS.
Pass
BALTISTAN
CHORBAT
SHAYOK
NUBRA
Dah
Hanu
Tegar
Partapura
Dumkhar
Khalsar
Tinmogang
Ri-Dzong Gompa
Yuru
Kalatse
Bodkharbu
Khardung
Likir Gompa
Tangyar
to Srinagar
Wangla
Basgo
Nyemo
Saspula
Hanupatta
Leh
Sheh
Spituk
Tikse
Pateksar
Chiling
Chushod
Zangskar R.
Himis
Upshi
DIPSANG PLAIN
Chang Chem
LIN
Pangkong Tso
Man
Pangkong
Chushul
ZANGSKAR
Gya
Indus
Debring
Maye
Niom
Karnak
Tso Kar
Puga
LAHUL
Korzok Gompa
Tso Moriri
SPITI
Author's itinerary
REFERENCES
Dards
Baltis
Changpas
Other Buddhists (not coloured)
Cease-fire line 1957 with Pakistan (approximate)
After Thakur Singh Asst. Settler
Pioneer Press. – Allahabad 1912

[114]

Map V. Sketch map of Ladak.

[facing P 335-A]

102
103
131
133
563


KARATAGH
MTNS.
Salt Lake
LINGZITHANG (PLAIN)
Salt Lake
Shyok
DIPSANG PLAIN
ngyar
Chang Chemo
TIBET
nis
shi
Man
Pangkong
Pangkong Tso
Pangkong Tso
Chushul
Indus
Maye
Nioma
Tso Kar
Puga
rzok
Gompa
Tso Moriri
ITI
Hanle
Koyul
Demchok
CHUMURTI
0 15 30 miles

ıfter Thakur Singh Asst. Settlement-officer, Ladak, 1968-1911
ionneer Press. – Allahabad 1912

[facing P. 335-B]

131 487 Trade routes through Ladak are important, and there are three principal roads: that to Central Asia, to Sinkiang in China, over the Karakorum Pass (18,550 ft.) from Leh towards the north; that to Tibet along the upper course of the Indus (eventually going on beyond the divide with the waters of the Brahmaputra towards Shigatse and Lhasa in Ü-Tsang); and that to Srinagar, capital of Kashmir, to the west, which used to be called the Indo-British Treaty Road (really a prolongation and continuation of the Central Asian road). The road from Kulu which I had followed is only a secondary one, and that over Rupchu is not worth considering at all as an artery for trade.

133 [101] [137] [361] 778 782 Scenically, Ladak resembles Tibet more than it does Lahul. In Rupchu, which, strictly speaking, is a part of Ladak, although an isolated one, I already noticed that I was no longer in country like the valleys of Lahul. I was on high plateau, with mountain ranges around me which did not seem particularly high but which in reality, because of the altitude at which I already found myself and from which I observed them, were among the highest anywhere. With the Indus valley, although still at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, I reached a milder environment. Here, there were trees and grass growing along the banks of the river and its affluents. Villages were visible, high up, above the long stretches of rocks and shingle brought down by rivers in spate, where glacier water runs on the surface before going on underground to link up with the main watercourse in the valley. *Chötens*, *mani* walls and large *gompas* were everywhere to be seen, as befits a Buddhist, Tibetan lamaist country.

2. *Population*

162 795 The population of Ladak at the time of my visit was estimated at 32,999. It was divided up into the conventional distinctions between Buddhists (29,410),[1] Mohammedans (3,470), Hindus and Sikhs (49) and Christians (70). The proportion of men to women (important among a people practising polyandry) was given to me as 14,760 men to 14,650 women for the Buddhists, as 1,730 men to 1,740 women for the Moslems, 36 to 13 for the Hindus and Sikhs (who rarely bring their women with them to these distant parts) and 37 to 33 for the Christians (nearly all converts of the Moravian Mission). As can be seen, the bulk of the population is made up of the Buddhist Ladakis of Tibetan extraction. They nearly all belong to the *Drug-pa* sect, although there are also rep-

---

[564] [1] The low-caste Mõns, Garas and Bhedas, all artisans, were apparently included among the Buddhists, although their religion appears more akin to animism.

Ladak

resentatives of the other lamaist sub-divisions, the *Gelug-pa* (*dGe-Lugs-* 162
pa) or Yellow Hats and the *Nyingma-pa* (*sNing-ma-pa*) or Red Hats. 795
The Moslems are all Shias, often called Baltis because of their affinity
to those people. An exception are the Sinkiang Turki and Uigur merchants [563]
who live in Leh and constitute a foreign minority; these people
are orthodox Sunnis. They have intermarried with the local Buddhist
Ladaki women, and their offspring are known in Leh as *Argons*; there
are about 300 of these, and they are classified with the Moslems, to
whose religion they always belong. A small ethnic group of distinctively [563]
different racial appearance, is constituted by the Dards living in the [142]
extreme west of Ladak. Culturally they are Buddhists like the bulk of
the population, but they are fair with blue eyes, and their features are
those of the Nordics of Europe.

The language spoken in the whole of Ladak is a dialect of Tibetan, 197
the characteristic of which is that it is more archaic in form than the
Tibetan spoken in Lhasa, where the language has gone through a process
of considerable evolution. Dogra is spoken by the ruling officials of
the Kashmir State and the Dards have a tongue of their own, an Aryan
language.

In physical appearance, the ordinary Ladaki men and women resemble 142
their Tibetan cousins in that they have broad, mongoloid faces,
slit eyes and black, straight hair. The men, however, have more hair
on their faces that the average Tibetan can grow, and this is a distinctive
characteristic. The masculine costume is the same as I have described 291
earlier for Rupchu, and I should add that both sexes wear their [302]
hair long, but plaited at the back. Washing among the peasantry is [515]
resorted to very little, and the general appearance of the Ladakis is
untidy and dirty, not to mention the fact that they smell strongly. When [821]
the weather gets chilly in the winter, or when a voyage to some other
part of the country necessitates going through a colder area, more
clothes are simply worn over those already on the body, and temperatures
are measured by the number of gowns one is obliged to put on.

The houses of the peasants and of the majority of the inhabitants of 342
Leh are solid structures built of stone in traditional Tibetan style. They [231]
are pleasant to look at with their flat roofs, white-washed walls and [354]
gaily painted doors and windows (the lower part of which is usually
broader that the upper part), but they have the drawback of having a
stable for the horses and mules on the ground floor, and no chimney
in the kitchen, the smoke being allowed to find its own way out through
the cracks and joints of the ceiling and roof.

3. *History*

174 Historically, Ladak seems to have been inhabited originally by emigrants from the plains, Indian in origin, whom the present day Ladakis call *Mon*. In central Tibet, this name is used for anything coming south of the Himalayas – thus *Mön-pa* (*Mon-pa*) for the inhabitants of Tawang, east of Bhutan, *Mön-la* for a pass leading to and from India, etc. There is every reason to believe then, that the Mons were simply people of Indian origin. They still exist in Ladak today, but are a very [101] lowly class of artisans and menials.

Prouder and physically very fine to look at, are the Dards, who appear to have occupied the country next. Herodotus calls them the most warlike of all the Indians, and we have seen that remnants of these fine people still exist in Ladak, at Dah. There is another settlement, but [101] Moslem, in Purig, just beyond the western boundary of Ladak, at Dras.

The Tibetans, of Mongol stock, were no doubt simultaneous emigrants into the Ladak highlands with the Dards. The two races inter- [144] mingled and the less mongoloid appearance of the Ladaki as compared to the central Tibetan is no doubt a result of this inmixture. The Tibetan element, however, proved the strongest, and by the tenth century A.D., Tibetan chieftains were in command in various parts of Ladak. The first kings of Leh considered themselves as descendants of the mythical Tibetan king Gesar of Ling (*Ge-sar gLing-ki rGyal-po*).

175 Recorded history in Western Tibet really begins with the events con- 648 nected with the Tibetan king Langdarma (*gLang Dar-ma*) and his attempts to eradicate the growing influence of Buddhism (about 800 A.D.). Two of his grandsons, after the failure of their grandfather's apostasy, went west and founded kingdoms of their own in the wilderness of the Kashmir border. Their dynasty was known as that of the *Lha-chen* (*Lha Ch'hen*) "great god" kings, and lasted until one of their [631] descendants, Lha-chen Bhagan, founded the so-called Namgyal (*rNam-rGyal*) dynasty in 1470. The present kings of Ladak (*La-Dwags-ki rGyal-po*) still belong to this royal line.

The Ladaki monarchy was involved in many wars with its neighbours, particularly with the Baltis to the north-west, and with the Mongols who had settled in central Tibet in the 17th century. Imprudently, in 1646, Delegs Namgyal (*bDe-legs rNam-rGyal*) declared his support for Bhutan, of which country he considered himself to be the military protector, with the result that he suffered an invasion of Mongol troops. His appeal for help to Shah Jahan, then Moghul emperor of India, did not go unanswered, and the Mongols were expelled. Not without the

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

Ladak's king having to pay for it, however, as he was forced by his [illegible] to become a Moslem. Shortly afterwards, the Mongols returned from entrenched positions near the Pangkong Tso, and in 1647, imposed a treaty known by the name of the king's capital, Tingmogang. In accordance with this, the frontier was fixed where it is today in the east, and Ladak was obliged to send a caravan with presents to Lhasa every three years. This latter clause was observed as late as 1950, but has been discontinued since the recent occupation of Tibet by the Chinese Communists. 175 648

After Delegs Namgyal had succeeded in extricating himself and his country, somewhat precariously, from the double threat of Mongol and Moghul entanglements, continuous quarrels of succession amongst his heirs further weakened the kingdom. The two kings, Tseten Namgyal (*Ts'he-brTan rNam-rGyal*) and Tsepal Namgyal (*Ts'he-dPal rNam-rGyal*), brothers who succeeded each other but who also lived in polyandry as long as the eldest of them was alive (the youngest was at the time a lama at Himis *gompa*), proved to be the last of the reigning line. [631] [595]

In 1819, Rangit Singh, king of the Sikhs and "Lion of the Punjab", conquered Kashmir with the assistance of Gulab Singh, Dogra Maharaja of Jammu. After the death of the Sikh monarch in 1834, the allies became estranged and Gulab Singh decided to consolidate his hold on the vale of Kashmir by extending his realm to include Baltistan and Ladak. The British were consulted, and when they expressed no objection, Zorowar Singh, Jammu's ablest general, was sent east with an expeditionary force. A great leader and a remarkable strategist, he succeeded very quickly in annexing Western Tibet, but the former allies, the Sikhs, did not allow the Dogras to enjoy their conquest. They continually conducted underhand intrigues with the object of stirring up trouble among the conquered Baltis and Ladakis. [631]

Time and again, Zorowar Singh was obliged to lead punitive and repressive campaigns, and Jigme Namgyal (*aJigs-Med rNam-rGyal*), grandson of the last reigning king of Ladak, was kept in Leh as a vassal king of the Dogra masters. In 1841, in order to distract their wards from rebelling against them, the Dogras decided to march into Tibet and to add Guge and other territories to the east to their Tibetan possessions. Zorowar Singh was again entrusted with the campaign, and this courageous and hardy soldier crossed the border of the Chang Thang in mid-winter. On December the 10th, he camped at an altitude of 15,000 feet, at Tirtapur, opposite the lines of a Tibetan army which Lhasa had sent to stop his progress. The battle, which began on that [631]

175
648
date, lasted three days, and Zorowar Singh was first cut down in a sword fight and then transfixed by the lance of a Tibetan horseman. The whole Dogra army, mainly composed of Ladakis and Baltis, seeing their leader dead, turned and fled, and the central Tibetans took advantage of the rout to occupy Leh.

They were, however, expelled from here shortly afterwards, by a fresh army which Jammu sent to relieve the Ladaki capital. This new force chased the Tibetans back to the frontier but came up against another lot of troops which Lhasa had sent under their two most able generals, Ragasha and Zurkhang. Zorowar Singh was avenged when the first of these two fell into Dogra hands and was beheaded; but the two armies did not pursue the battle. They came to terms, and the ancient treaty of Tingmogan, signed nearly two hundred years ago, was re-enacted. The frontier with Tibet was made to follow the line which it had then and still has today; the thrice-yearly caravan of presents from Ladak was taken over by the Kashmir government, who continued to send it to Lhasa, as I said above, until the entry of Chinese Communist troops into Tibet. Jigme Namgyal, who had survived all these clashes, was demoted to raja, and continued to live at Stog, the family seat to which his grandfather, Tsepal Namgyal, had moved in 1820.

175
631
648
In 1846, after the British victory over the Sikhs at Sobraon, Kashmir, including Ladak, came under Jammu with certain treaty rights reserved for the British. *Pax Britannica* was thus extended to the upper Indus valley and lasted for one hundred years until the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan again brought turmoil to this north-western part of the sub-continent. Today, Ladak is part of the Indian state of Kashmir, and its chief Lama, Kusho Bakula (*sKu-gShogs Bakula*) of Spituk *gompa* (first and most ancient *Gelug-pa* monastery of Ladak) is its representative at the Assembly, as well as a vice-Premier, of the State.

4. *Administration*

105
631
In 1938 when I was in Ladak, the Kashmir administration consisted of a Wazir-i-Wazarat in charge of Baltistan and the three *tehsils* of Ladak, Kargil and Skardu. A small garrison of Dogra troops was stationed in the old fort at Leh. The chief function of the Wazir seemed to be the [439] supervision of the Central Asian trade from Sinkiang, which crossed over the Karakorum pass through Leh to Srinigar, along the Indo-British Treaty road. The latter name was indicative that the British had a share in this supervision, and in fact, the British Assistant Resident

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

in Kashmir was Commissioner for the Government of India jointly with the Wazir for this work. 105 631

Under the Wazir-i-Wazaret came the Tehsildar of Leh, responsible for the collection of revenue and assisted by a Naib Tehsildar. Below them, and charged with minor administrative jobs in the villages and along the main roads, were the zehildars, the lumbadars and the kardars. The latter minor officials were responsible for giving Central Asian travellers any assistance that they needed along the Trade Route. They had, however, to be natives of Tibetan extraction. [985]

The ancient Ladaki political organization was still in existence at the time of my visit, but was divested of all power, and only survived because of the prestige which it still enjoyed in the eyes of the people. Thus the king of Ladak (*La-Dwags rGyal-po*), although reduced to the rank of raja of Stog and receiving a small allowance from the Kashmir durbar, was even then looked up to as the country's legitimate ruler. 105 177 554 631

In his castle of Stog which I visited, I was surprised to see that the king was assisted not only by court officials who had kept the titles of days gone by, but also by a council of ministers calling themselves *Kalön* (*bKa-bLon*). These personages, although without any real power, still met in a legislative assembly of their own; their positions were hereditary and they received the (modest) revenue of the village that each of them lived in. I was told that other offices, such as those of governor of a province or *Lönpo* (*bLon-po*), revenue officer of the Crown or *Nang-dzö* (*Nang-mDzod*), lumbadar or *Tungspun* (*Drung-spun?*) and assistant lumbadar or *Togache* (*T'hoga-ches?*), no longer existed although the descendants of those who had held them hereditarily were still looked upon with some consideration. At social occasions involving only Ladakis, these people were still given privileged positions. I met the Queen on this occasion, and found that, as I had been told, she was a sister of the Thakur of Gungrang in Lahul. She was not living in polyandry as her husband had no brothers, but it was expected that her two boys would eventually take one wife in common, as was the ancient custom. 105 595 631

5. *Land-tenure and economy*

The collection of revenue in Ladak is naturally the responsibility of the Kashmir administration. The basis of assessment of the revenue is a rather arbitrary one, being simply the holding or the house, which is called *zhing-kham* (*Zhing-K'hams*) allotted by the State and which is farmed by a single family unit, the head of the latter being responsible 105 423 651

105 for the payment of the tax. The size of the holding or the quality of the
423 soil is not taken into consideration, and this has led to complaints of
651 unjust imposition, which the government has tried in the past to remedy.
Cash is the medium in which taxes are paid, but along the Trade Route, grain and wood are often collected by the authorities instead, as these products are badly needed by the traders on their way to and from Central Asia. In 1938, revenue totalled Rs. 50,823.

105 The *zhing-k'ham* is in every way comparable to the *khalsa khotis* of
423 Lahul, which are really *jeolas* or allotments by the State to individuals
429 as we have seen (see p. 309). They are unlimited in time and the tenant-occupant cannot be evicted. As it is said in Ladak, he will have his holding "until the Kang-ri (*Gangs-ri*) glacier melts", or "until the crow turns white", or "until Tso Mapan (Lake Manasarowar) dries up", or "until the rocks grow hair", or "until the rivers run uphill', or again "until the pencil cedar loses its leaves".

A tenant-occupant is allowed to sub-let his holding to another tenant, and he can do this also in perpetuity, so that the sub-tenant cannot be evicted either. These two types of tenancy, the one from the State and the other from a tenant of the latter, are called tenancy with occupation. They are to be distinguished from tenancy without occupation, which is limited in time, and from which the tenant can be evicted. Usually, a fixed time for the tenancy is decided upon in advance if it is to be of the limited type and after a certain date the temporary holder has no longer any right of occupation. Mohammedans all over Ladak can be evicted even from holdings in which there is tenancy with occupation if the family unit has no male issue, in which case, the holding either reverts to the State's tenant, or to the State, whichever the case may be. Tenancy with occupation in the case of Buddhists is hereditary, and a female heir in no way compromises the succession and the ownership of the holding, as we shall see.

105 Barley, wheat, peas, beans, are among the principal crops grown in
241 Ladak in the spring. In the autumn, buckwheat, millet and turnips are
cultivated, together with a certain amount of fodder grasses for the
[134] cattle. The soil is sandy nearly everywhere, and careful manuring is
essential. Earth is often brought from the hill-sides for top-dressing of
the fields, and it is not uncommon to see this being done when the
snow is still lying on the ground, in order to hasten the thaw. Ploughing
[231] is done with *dzos* (hybrids of yak and cow), which, together with ordinary cattle and ponies, constitute the domestic animals to be found in Ladak. The sexes divide agricultural work among themselves in such

The sexes divide agricultural work among themselves in such 105
a way that the ploughing, transport and marketing of goods is done by 439
the men, while the women milk the cows and *dzos*, feed them, sow and [962]
weed the fields. Trading further afield is the responsibility of the men, [241]
and, as everywhere in areas of Tibetan culture, they do not hesitate to [234]
undertake great journeys of many thousands of miles lasting months [484]
and in some cases years. Apricots are a great speciality of Ladak, exported in dry form far and wide, and enjoying a great reputation as being of the best variety.

Borax is produced in Rupchu, and salt comes from evaporation of 105 [258]
the brackish waters of the lakes. There is a certain amount of gold, [317]
too, to be found in the rivers, and in some parts it is even mined, as it [316]
is further afield in the Ngari Korsum province of Tibet.

6. *Leh*

Leh (spelt *sLa* in Tibetan) is a large village situated at an altitude of 361
11,503 feet, in the Indus valley, some distance from the river, on the right bank, high up in a side valley, where the water from glacier formations above enters the ground to run subterraneously down to the main
stream. Below it, close to the river bank, is Spituk (*sPitug*) with its [792]
ancient monastery on a stone hillock, dominating the plain.

The population of Leh is certainly much greater now than it was 162
then. In 1938, it was only 2,377, and it was divided up into the same 795
religious denominations as we have seen earlier for the whole of Ladak. There were 1,287 Buddhists (with the same reservations concerning low castes as before), 991 Mohammedans, 43 Sikhs Hindus and 56 Christians.

The Buddhists, it can be seen, constituted the vast majority. They were all those Ladakis of Tibetan affinity, whose mongoloid features made them immediately and easily recognizable. Among them, there were reported to be 650 men to 637 women.

The Moslems included Kashmiris from the valley, Turki, Uigur and Yarkandi traders from Sinkiang in Central Asia, Argons or those whose fathers had taken local Ladaki women as wives, and a few Baltis from the neighbouring sub-division. There were 447 men to 544 women in this religious community. Among the Hindus and Sikhs there were 30 men to 13 women. The community was only a temporary one made up
of officials and employees of the Kashmir State. The Christians were [797]
all converts of the Moravian Mission, 31 men to 25 women. Leh is the principal station of this Mission in Western Tibet, with another station in Kalatse, lower down the Indus.

b) *Polyandry in Ladak*

1. *Generalities*

595 From the informants and interpreters whom I mention in Appendix 2,
acknowledging their services, I heard that polyandry was practised quite
intensely in and all around Leh. Asked what the proportion of polyandrous
[795] families was to the rest of the Buddhist population (the only
one, naturally, among which polyandry was to be found), my informants
told me that out of one hundred families, ninety of them lived in this
form of matrimony. I enquired about the remaining ten per cent; was
it that they did not want polyandry, or that they were not able, for lack
of brothers in a family for instance, to follow the prevalent custom?
The answer was that both explanations were correct. In some cases,
polyandry was not possible because of the composition of the family.
But in others, polyandry was deliberately rejected, as something undesirable.
177 There was a growing tendency to this effect, it seemed, in
595 Leh, especially among the better educated, the wealthier and those who
795 had travelled to the big cities in the plains of India.

The tendency to give up polyandry, was not well looked upon by the
[626] rest of the community. It was considered all wrong, and parents would
disinherit their sons and daughters who refused to live in accordance
with the traditional rules of marriage. This was interpreted as showing
that the polyandrous Ladaki Buddhists were very moral in their outlook
and would not tolerate any laxity in their customs. Nono Tse-P'hün
[115] (short for Tseten P'hüntzok), who was my principal interpreter and one
of my best informants, although a Christian himself (later, in 1947, he
became Tehsildar of Ladak), assured me that the Buddhists were the
most moral of all the communities living in Leh, that is the most strict
with those of their members who would not conform to the habitual
standards of correct and accepted social behaviour.

595 The problem of what happens to surplus women in a polyandrous
society immediately came to mind when I began my investigations. As
the proportion of men to women among the polyandrous Buddhists was
roughly equal (only thirteen more men than women), it was obvious
that if ninety percent of the one thousand two hundred and eighty seven
strong community actually practised polyandry, quite a number of unbetrothed
women would have to be accounted for. The reply which I
got to this question was that, although many men's sisters remained at
[563] home as spinsters among the wealthy, in the bulk of the community,
unmarried women found Moslem husbands to whom they were only

temporarily married after having converted themselves to the Islamic 595
religion, as their husbands desired. This I understood to be the origin [563]
of the Argons.

It will not always be possible when giving an account of the data [124]
collected in Leh concerning polyandry to quote, every time, as I have done before, the date and site because much time was spent travelling about with the informants, conversing with them and gathering pieces of information in an informal, non-systematic fashion. This appeared to be the best way in Ladak to gain their confidence and to obtain as much as possible from them. Then also, writings concerning polyandry [127]
in this part of the world were available in Leh, either in the Residence [115]
of the British Assistant Resident where I stayed, or from the Moravian Mission and from my two principal Christian informants, Joseph Gergan and Nono Tseten P'hüntzok. The names of these works are listed in the accompanying Bibliography.

Since I already knew something about Tibetan polyandry from my [124]
observations in Lahul, as described above, I was able, in Leh, to go straight into the subject and to proceed along comparative lines rather than merely to explore unfamiliar fields in which I endeavoured to make discoveries. Thus I was able to find out immediately that the 595
Ladaki type of polyandry was, in essentials, the same as that of Lahul, 428
namely that the holding or house was the pivot, the axis around which 184
it revolved.

The inhabitants of Ladak, having this in common with all people of Tibetan cultural affinity, are also loth to divide up the family property and to see its name die out. Consequently they resort to the same matrimonial and inheritance safeguards as we had seen at work in Lahul: polyandry and either patrilineal or matrilineal succesion, depending upon whether there are male or only female heirs.

I very quickly discovered from my informants that the two big differences from what I had seen before were that, in Ladak, a rule of primogeniture existed by which only the eldest inherited all the property, and that fields were not divided up among brothers, but all belonged to the eldest one alone. I noted that it brought the system of [651]
tax collection much more into line with actual ownership for, as I have said, the head of the family unit is responsible, under the Kashmir administration, for the revenue to be gathered from the holding. In other words, the proprietor himself is answerable, and not a number of persons, usually brothers, as they are in Lahul.

If there are boys in a family, it is the eldest son who inherits the (587)

If there are boys in a family, it is the eldest son who inherits the
595 whole holding and the family name, and is the lawful occupier-tenant
428 of either State or tenant *zhing-kham*. He has full rights of enjoyment
[423] and disposal which he shares with no one. If there are no boys to
inherit the house and family name, then the eldest daughter will take
over, provided that she has not married out of the house beforehand.
[586] Cases are known, however, in which a daughter married out has been
divorced and brought back to the family holding in order to take it over
and carry it on intact to another generation.

595 Marriage in Ladak, as in Lahul, is either *bag-ma* (patrilocal and patri-
[184] lineal or *mag-pa* (matrilocal and matrilineal). These names are some-
times replaced by the terms *na-ma* (*mNa-ma*) meaning "daughter-in-
law", and *bag-po* (*bag-po*) for "bridegroom".

Bag-ma marriage is a fraternally polyandrous one in most cases, all the brothers of the bridegroom becoming automatically husbands of the bride. It is the custom, usually, only to have the elder son and the next eldest one at the ceremony, but it is understood that whatever other boys there are in a family are also married to the wife of the eldest.

Mag-pa marriage can also be polyandrous, if the heiress so desires. But in this case, it is non-fraternal, the woman usually choosing husbands who are unrelated and the secondary ones being generally younger than their predecessors. A man can be *mag-pa* to an heiress and to her sisters, but unless he is formally married to them all, he only has a right of access to the younger ones; they are free at any time to leave the household and to contract *bag-ma* marriages outside.

[184] The institution of the *porjag* exists also in Ladak; such a man is called
[842] in if the bride remains childless. It appears, however, that a second
such extra man is never brought into a family, it being considered un-
befitting to do so, whereas in Lahul there are no such scruples. The
custom of taking a wife extra to the one already existing, is also prac-
tised in Ladak, the new woman being called *chan-chung* (*Byan-ch'hung*)
in such a case. Actually, there is no limit to the amount of wives a
man, or men, living in polyandry, may take in. It is, however, not
[177] considered proper to have more than four wives at a time – possibly
the result of Moslem influence in the country. The formalities of mar-
[585] riage are only observed on the occasion of the first marriage (called
chan-ch'hen (*Byan-ch'hen*)), while on the occasion of *chan-ch'hung*
mentioned above, or of *yang-chung* (*Yang-ch'hung*), taking a third or
fourth wife, only *chang* is given to relatives, and that part of the mar-
riage ceremony in which head cloths are put on is performed. The
second, third and fourth wives are generally selected from relatives of

the first one and with mutual consent. The first wife will always have 595 the right to preside over the household, as she is the senior.

If a family has no heirs, it is possible for it to adopt one. This right 597 is practised by persons of both sexes, whether they are married or not. The institution is called *Bu-skal* (*Bu-sKal*) or *Bu-dod* (*Bu-dod*), which words have the significance of "child-instead". The general rule is that the person to be adopted is taken from among the kinsmen of the husband and is married with a girl chosen out of the relatives of the wife. On the other hand, if a girl is adopted from among the relations of the husband, a *mag-pa* must be brought in to her from the agnates of the wife. If the adopted child is taken from a family having no blood relation with the adopting person, *chang* and presentation scarves called *Kha-tag* (*K'ha-bTags*) are offered to the parents and relatives of the person to be adopted. In certain cases, this offer is repeated more than once and *Khatags* are placed on the neck of the person to be adopted and those of his parents again and again until they give way. If the adoption is made from among the kindred, the ceremony of giving *chang* and offering food in a family repast is considered sufficient. The [428] adoption is in most cases recorded in writing in the form of a deed; the person adopting binds himself or herself to recognize the adopted child as his or her only legal heir. Should a child be born to the adopting person after this, the offspring will not be able to take the place of the adopted person, the deed of adoption being irrevocable.

2. *Betrothal and wedding ceremonies*

Betrothal takes place at a very early age in Ladak – usually before ten 584 with regard to the girl, between that age and twelve with regard to the boys. First, horoscopes of the potential candidates are taken, and the [787] parents (or guardians) of the bridegroom or bridegrooms call at the house of the bride to present *chang* and *khatags* to her parents. This ceremony bears the name of *Tri chang* (*Tri-ch'hang*) and in it the petitioning party makes the offer six or seven times to express insistence.

When this part of the proceedings is finished, the parents of the girl accept the request, but demand for themselves and for their daughter more *chang*, tea, butter, *khatags* and food. All relatives of both sides take part in this ritual which is known as *Hol-chang* (*Hol-ch'hang?*) or *Tri-chang chen-mo* (*Tri-ch'hang ch'hen-mo*), "the great ask *chang*".

This is followed by the important *Nyen-chang* (*gNyen-ch'hang*) or [583] "relatives' *chang*". The bride-to-be's relatives receive more *chang*, [421] loaves, meat, tea, butter and *khatags*, as well as the bridegroom's con-

584 [583] [421] tribution to the dowry, called *Rin-t'ho* (*Rin-t'ho*), "price list". This will eventually constitute part of the wife's own personal property, called *Rag-tag* (*Rag-rTags?*), which can never be included in that of her husband or husbands, except by inheritance after her death. The second part of this ceremony consists in the essential *Go-ras* (*mGo-ras*) or "cotton cloth", the laying of *khatags* on the head of the bride (or brides if a *mag-pa* is married to more than one sister) which is a point of no return. If a betrothal is broken up after this ritual has taken place it is incumbent to act as though a divorce were necessary since the parties are considered to be as good as married. The near relatives of the girl receive more *khatags* from the bridegroom's family, and a piece of cloth is taken to the kitchen where it is tied round one of the pots. Other presents, such as ornaments, cash and turquoises are sometimes added here to the gifts made to the family of the bride.

In return, the visiting party receives a piece of cloth and a dish to [585] [436] take home. The latter will then plan the wedding feast, called *Bag-ston* (*Bag-ston*), in every detail, calculate what the total of the dowry will amount to in *jos* (equivalent to Rupees 4/13/–), and decide the auspicious date upon which the final rites will take place.

585 [583] If the girl's parents do not give their consent to the marriage of their daughter as they are being requested to do, the boy's or boys' relatives will try and carry off the bride. The ceremony of laying the *go-ras* on her head will take place in the house of a male relative of hers, to whom presents have previously been given, and the marriage will be consummated immediately afterwards. The wife will then be sent home to her parents for some time. After they have been informed of what has happened, and forgiveness for the *fait accompli* has been obtained by repeated offerings of *chang* and *khatags*, the full wedding ceremony will take place. The latter bears the name of *Bag-log* (*Bag-log*) or "return wedding", but the wedding ritual in its entirety is called *Bagma-sbaste* (*Bagma-sBaste*) or "marriage by stealth". The same can apply to a *mag-pa* wedding, when it is called *Magpa-sbaste*.

[584] In the case of adults, the parties themselves arrange for their marriage, and there is no special wedding ceremony. After a period of cohabitation between the partners, the husband (or eldest of them) will visit the parents of the woman and give them *chang* and *khatags* in order to be accepted. Their consent, however, is not necessary for the union to be valid. This procedure is known in Ladak as *Pot'had-mot'had* (*Po-aT'had Mo-aT'had*), "male, female acceptance".

[illegible] Although it is mainly patrilineal descent which is observed in Ladak

although 582
it is mainly patrilineal descent which is observed in Ladak
(there exist patrilineal clans here, as in Lahul, called *p'ha-spun* (*P'ha-* 611
sPun), of which I shall speak later), dual descent is taken into con- 614
sideration in what concerns degrees of marriage prohibition. Thus one [184]
can never marry within the paternal clan, and only a blood relative of one's mother beyond the seventh degree of relationship. In the poorer classes it is said that such a prohibition is only observed up to the fifth degree.

The wedding ceremonies of the well-to-do Ladaki families are most 585
elaborate and spectacular. In more modest households, however, *chang* is simply offered three or four times to the bride's relatives after *Tri-chang* in what is called *Bsu-chang* (*bSu-ch'hang*) or "taking-home-*chang*", and on the day fixed for the wedding, the bridegroom's (eldest) father, *azhang* or maternal uncle and some of the members of his *p'ha-spun* escort the girl to his house and the main ceremony follows. This is similar to the equivalent ceremony among the wealthier people, which I now propose to describe in greater detail.

We should first distinguish between *bag-ma* and *mag-pa* marriage, and since the former of the two is the most elaborate, I shall take it first. Before the commencement of the principal ceremonies, and after the formalities following upon the *Go-ras* ritual have taken place, a feast called *Drags-chang* (*Drags-ch'hang*) or "very much *chang*" is given to the bride's parents by their relatives. They bring *tsampa*, *chang*, sheep and goat carcasses, tea, butter, rice and cash to help them with the occasion. The same kind of feast is held in the bridegroom's house for his (or their) parents by the latters' relatives.

Then the first phase of the wedding festivities begins. On the date decided upon, a procession is formed at the bridegroom's house. It consists of his father, his *azhang*, members of his *p'ha-spun*, fifteen to twenty in number. It never includes the boy himself, who stays at home
and waits. Towards the close of day, all these people will set out ac- [535]
companied by a dancing party, gorgeously dressed, of five to nine *Nya-*
opas (*gNya-bo-pa*) or "witnesses". These, chosen among the friends [087]
and companions of the bridegroom, are designated by astrology; their principal qualification is that they know the appropriate dance steps and songs to be sung. They are led by a *Nya-pön* (*gNya-dPon*) or "chief witness".

As they proceed towards the bride's house, they are offered *chang* and *tsampa* on the way by anyone who cares to come along from the village. They take these offerings in their hands as blessings of good luck, and in return pay out cash in small coins. Some distance from

585 their destinaton, the people in the procession are intercepted by members of the girl's family, both male and female, called either *Nang-mi* (*Nang Mi*) "people of the interior", or *Yado Dzao* (*Ya-do mDza-bo*) "companion-friends". These beat them with sticks and make a pretence of holding them up. The bridegroom's relatives offer pieces of cloth, *khatags*, and cash (annas) to appease the trouble-makers, and they are then subject to questioning and answering in song form, based on the eighteen Puranas, called on this occasion *Nya-rabs Chop-gyat* (*gNya-rabs bCho-brGyad*) "the eighteen legends of the witnesses".

The same show of resistance is made again at the door of the girl's house (including thorns put deliberately on the ground to impede sitting down) and more offerings are made to remove the obstacles. The leaders of the procession then state the object of their visit, and proceed to dance round a *tsampa* and bread image called *Drangyas* (*Brang-rGyas*) which has been put up in the yard together with the carcass of a whole sheep or *Sha-kog* (*Sha-k'hog*). Lamas who are present here, begin worship while the dance is still on.

A feast follows, during which the bride is hidden away, her horse is stolen, she is not allowed to go to the toilet, etc., and is generally bothered by her relatives who express in this way their (feigned) disinclination to let her go. Her father and *azhang* are paid some nominal sum of money so that an end is put to this mischief, and the girl is produced. She then has a *khatag* wound round her head and is led into the kitchen, where the lamas conduct a religious ceremony called *yang-kug* (*gYang-k'hug*) which is an evocation of blessing addressed to the pre-Buddhist god of wealth, in order to secure happiness and prosperity for the bride.

Clothes, ornaments, horses, yaks, sheep, goats, grain and cash are now offered to the boy's family by that of the bride. The bridegroom's relatives pay back with Rin-t'ho, as decided earlier, and by offering a purely nominal sum of two or three rupees as the price of the milk of the bride's mother, called *Omä Rin* (*aO-mai Rin*) "milk price". Then they all settle down, on both the bride's and the bridegroom's side, to the serious business of drafting the marriage contract.

585
675 In this document, the details of the girl's dowry are listed, what the property of the bridegroom will be is specified, the "assistance" which the bride will have from a number of other husbands, i.e. the brothers of the eldest one, is recorded, and sometimes a clause is inserted that if the husband does not turn out to be up to the mark, she will be authorized to bring in a *mag-pa* of her choice. All men present are

witness to the signature of this document. Those who sign are the *Nya-pön*[1] and the father of the bridegroom; the latter adds a pledge that he is bound to carry out his promises as to the amount of property which will be that of the young people when they are married. The original goes to the bride's relations, and the boy's family retains a duplicate.

The bridal party remains the night in the house and in the morning sets out for the bridegroom's house, taking the bride with them, and the second phase of the wedding ceremony begins.

The bride is received at the entrance of the bridegroom's house by two or more lamas, reciting prayers. They hold an earthenware vessel full of foodstuffs (*chang*, *tsampa*, rice, tea, dried apricots, and various varieties of vegetables) called *Zablug* (*Za-bLugs* (*-sku*) or "victual earthen vessel", which one of them whirls around the head of the bridegroom as he stands on the doorstep waiting for his future wife. The pot is then taken to a large stone standing close by, upon which crossed *dorjes* (*rDo-rJe*) have been drawn with a piece of charcoal, and is broken upon it. This initial ceremony is called *Gyag-chod* (*rGyag-ch'hod*) meaning "casting the hindrance away".

Then everybody troops into the house and a feast begins in which there is much singing and dancing and the expenses of which are paid by the bridegroom's *azhang*. The bride is brought in, and is seated with her bridegroom and his brothers (today, usually only the next eldest brother) in the kitchen on a white piece of cloth upon which grain has been strewn. They are made to eat out of the same plate, and one of the witnesses, who now assumes the role of *Na-tri-pa*, as we have already seen in Lahul, puts a *go-ras* or cotton cloth on the head of the boys.

The third phase of the marriage, the most important one, follows. The *Na-tri-pa*, who is also known as the *Tashi-pa* (*bKra-shis-pa*) or "lucky one", in Ladak, conducts the bride into the store room of the house. He carries a *Da-dar* (*mDa-dar*) or arrow with flags in the five colours of Buddhism, a mirror, a sheep's ankle bone, and a *khatag*, and is followed by the bridegroom or bridegrooms. Once they have all got into the room, the match-maker (for that is what the "nose-conducting-one" is) removes the *go-ras* which the bride has been wearing since she was taken from her house, and those of the men which have just been put on in the kitchen, and lays them down on a plate containing barley grains which is standing on a table or a ledge close by. He then hooks the bride by the collar from behind with the *Da-dar*, as a symbol of taking her out from among other girls whom the men

[1] [i.e., The "Chief witness"--Analyst]

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

585 could have married, and the parties are declared wed. This is the binding ritual which makes them husbands and wife. Unless it has been
[589] performed, the wife is not allowed into any private house or monastery in Ladak, just as unmarried girls are not permitted to worship at shrines, except at those of families in the houses.

A feast lasting three days is the next item on the programme. On the first day, the local villagers are fed, on the second the relatives and friends, and on the third the helpers and members of the bridegroom's *p'ha-spun*. Dancing round the *Drangyas* and the *Sha-kog* still standing in the yard, takes place on each of these days, and on the last one, it is broken up and distributed to the family and relatives, who accept the pieces as holy and of good omen. The Sha-kog, particularly, is taken to the bride's home, where it is sliced into pieces and given to her family to eat, the last morsel being given to her. Then the witnesses are paid off, each of them, in 1938, getting one rupee, and their helpers half that amount, while the lamas, who took part in the ceremony, receive a square piece of cloth each and some cash.

In the case of a *mag-pa* marriage, the same order of procedure is followed, except that the roles are reversed, so to speak, the man taking the part of the woman, and the woman that of the bridegroom. It is the *mag-pa* who is conducted in ceremony to the bride's house, and not
[675] the other way round. When signing the contract of marriage, it is the girl's parents who endorse the pledge that her future husband will enjoy the property which is hers with him.

591
595
425
428
~~886~~
[585]

3. *Division of property between parents and children*

When the eldest child of a Buddhist family in Ladak marries, the time has come for his or her parents to leave their home, to give up the house and the property belonging to it to their son of daughter, who has the right to enter immediately into possession of the greater part of his or her inheritance.

[888] A small portion, sufficient for the support of the several fathers, the mother and unmarried younger sisters that there may be, is made over to them while the remaining, larger portion, is at once acquired by the eldest son or daughter as his or her exclusive property.

This custom, which forces parents of grown-up, married children to retire from active life and from the responsibilities of their household when they are still not much beyond middle age, is called *K'hang chen K'hang gu cho ches* (*K'hang ch'hen K'hang bu Pyo Ches*), or translated literally, "Big house, small house to make".

The parents and the unmarried sisters go to live in the *k'hang-gu* or 591
small house (which may be either a small part of the large house, or a 595
separate one on the family land, or even lodgings in some one else's 585
house if a *k'hang-gu* cannot be afforded by the family), while the eldest 425
son or daughter takes over the major portion of the household which 428
is called the *K'hang-chen*. 888

The reason for doing things in this way is, I was told by Joseph [606]
Gergan on the 6th October 1938, that bride and mother-in-law unless
separated, are sure to quarrel. A Tibetan proverb says: [539]

P'ha gNyen-bo sGo rGyap-la
Ma gNyen-bo Gog sBugs-la

which means:

"The father's relations are behind the door
The mother's relations are right inside the hearth."

Or, in other words, that the relations of the husband(s) should be turned out, while the wife's relations can always be sure of a warm welcome in in the home – that is in a *bag-ma* household; in a *mag-pa* one this naturally does not apply.

Reasons for the existence of this special custom, valid for both *bag-* 595
ma and *mag-pa* marriage, have been given as the fact that the parents 886
are getting old (after fifty, Ladakis, like Tibetans, age very quickly), 425
and that, for this reason, they can no longer assume responsibility for 428
the cultivation of the land, nor continue to bear the burden of the re- [145]
curring festivals, etc. So they go into the *k'hang-gu* where they have no obligations any more, and leave their newly wedded children to shoulder the charges which go with possession of the *k'hang-chen*.

The *k'hang-gu* consists of a smaller house, standing generally on the 595
land of the *k'hang-chen*, and of the fields called *To-zhing* (*lTo-zhing*), 888
"food-field", necessary for the maintenance of the persons who live in 425
it. No charges or dues are collected from the *k'hang-gu* by the Kashmir 428
State, and those who live in it do so absolutely freely. The portion of [651]
the father or fathers is called *p'ha-skal* (*P'ha-skal*), and that of the mother *ma-skal* (*Ma-skal*), for such division between parents is observed. Unmarried sisters live on the *p'ha-skal*.

The fields of the *k'hang-gu* can be cultivated by the inhabitants of the *k'hang-chen*; this saves trouble for the old folk. But if no such labour is forthcoming, then the *ma-skal* will be cultivated by the relatives of the mother, while the fathers and the unmarried sisters will look after the *p'ha'skal*.

Apart from land to be tilled, there are some animals in the *k'hang-gu*

595 such as cattle, sheep and goats in small quantities. Its dwellers also
425 have household utensils and movable property such as furniture. These
428 things, the size of the house, and the amount of fields and animals, vary
888 from household to household, but are fixed quantities within each one
individually; they do not change but remain the same for every succeeding
generation.

595 The elder son or daughter who has acquired ownership of the *k'hang-chen*
425 takes over full proprietorship, which includes not only the rights
428 that go with it, but also the obligations. Thus, an elder son has to look
after his younger brothers, maintain them whatever their behaviour, be
[851] it good or bad (he may never disinherit them), share his wife with them
and look upon the children born to him as just as much theirs as his
own. Younger brothers are at liberty to leave and contract marriages
elsewhere if they so wish; in actual fact, they often do become *mag-pas*
of heiresses, in which case they forfeit their rights to property in the
[792] *k'hang-chen* of their elder brother. Sometimes, they become lamas and
join some monastery, in which case they are entitled to retain their
share or give it up, as they please.

595 The owner of the *k'hang-chen* must see to it that the monthly *lha-bsang*
796 (*lHa-bSang* (*aBras*)) or "god meal (of rice)" ceremony is performed.
This takes place on the 10th of each month – and sometimes
on the 8th too. Occasionally, a neighbour will help by holding the rite
in his house for both households, and vice-versa. The New Year Tibetan
festival must also be observed, as well as those agricultural feasts which
occur at sowing time in February and March (*sa-kag*, *ma-zhing*) and at
the harvest in October (*sGrub-lha*).

595 An obligation exists also to white-wash *chötens* and *mani*-walls regularly,
651 and for some, to do the same to the walls of the castle at Leh.
Death rites must be carried out, tax paid to the Kashmir government
(which holds only the owner of the *k'hang-chen* responsible for this) as
well as various dues and *ulag* or *begar* (forced, unpaid labour) acquitted
to those to whom it is owed (government, monasteries). Divorced sisters
595 who return home must be looked after (they have the right to live
586 in the *k'hang-chen* and do not go to the *k'hang-gu*), and younger sons
who go to Lhasa for studies and employment must have their expenses
paid by the head of the family.

595 My informant, Nono Tse P'hün, told me that he had seen households
591 in which not only the parents lived in a *k'hang-gu*, but also grandparents
888 and even great-grandparents. In Likir, there was in 1953 a great-grandfather
who had outlived everyone in the various *k'hang-gus* on

Ladak

the property, and, because he had remained all alone, had requested to be allowed to return to the *k'hang-chen*. He was given permission to do so by his great-grandson. 591 595 888

Parents are not really bound by custom to move into the *k'hang-gu* as described above. They can go on living in the *k'hang-chen* if they so decide, and their children (and the wife) agree to it. A family in which parents and married offspring thus live together is called *k'hang-shi zang-po* (*K'hang-gShis bZang-po*). I understand that an increasing amount of households are giving up the old custom of *k'hang-chen k'hang-gu cho ches*, because, as my informants told me, "nobody wants it any more". [1] [178]

At the death of the occupiers of the *k'hang-gu*, it reverts to the *k'hang-chen*; should the mother die first, the *ma-skal* will revert immediately, while the *p'ha-skal* will only become part of the main portion of the family property when it is not occupied any longer by either fathers or unmarried sisters. The *k'hang-gu* of a grandparent or of a great-grandparent reverts to the *k'hang-chen* at the demise of its occupier, and not to the *k'hang-gu* in which the parents and sisters are living, as might be expected. Unmarried sisters can leave to be wed in *bag-ma*, in which case their occupation ceases and the *k'hang-gu* is re-absorbed by the *k'hang-chen*. 428 595

4. *Divorce and marital irregularities*

Divorce in Ladak is called *Chad-dral* (*bChad-aBral*) or "cut separate". 586 There is rarely a ceremony connected with it, and formalities are reduced to the minimum. Usually, repudiation of one of the parties by the other takes place orally, simply in the presence of witnesses. It is possible, however, to have a written deed made out, which contains the declaration of divorce, the evidence gathered to justify it, and a record of how the dowry of the woman was paid back to the family. The ceremony which sometimes takes place is called *Lso-pang* (*lSo-sPang*) or "dung reject", and occurs when a husband or husbands wish to divorce their *bag-ma* wife. After the latter has been repudiated in either of the ways described above, the men's *p'ha-spuns* are feasted with *chang*. Salt, onions, grain and the remains of the fermented grain with which the *chang* was made, are thrown into the fire and the ashes cast away. Sometimes, instead of these things being burnt, sheep and goat droppings will be collected and symbolically cast away.

If a woman wishes to divorce her husband – an heiress her *mag-pa*, or a widow her deceased husband's younger brothers, with whom she [968]

[1] [See discussion in category 116, pp 352-355--An.]

586 refuses to live any longer – she will sometimes tie a thread between one
[768] of her fingers and one of those of the (dead) man, and cut it across to
show that she is free.

Divorce in Ladak is irrevocable, but can be conditional. It is thus
[839] sometimes stipulated in cases of proven infidelity that the partner at
fault will not be authorized to remarry the paramour, and that if this
does take place, the marriage will be void and the divorce non-existent.

A *bag-ma* wife can be divorced by her husband(s) on the grounds of mutual incompatability of temperament, of her own infidelity (in which case she loses all rights of compensation), of her carelessness and ignorance of her household duties, of what her parents-in-law consider to be her serious defects.

A *bag-ma* wife will be allowed to divorce her husband, on the other hand, if impotence is proved in his case, if he is obviously unfaithful and adulterous, if he ill-treats her, or if she is wilfully neglected.

In a *mag-pa* marriage, the wife can repudiate her husband and divorce him without any reason whatever; all she has to do is to turn
him out of the house. Consequently, to be a *mag-pa* is not an enviable
[595] position really, in Ladak. Many younger brothers seem, however, to
prefer it to being the junior partners of a polyandrous marriage, and it
is to be presumed that much depends on the merits of each individual
case. Immorality in a *mag-pa* is very rarely evoked by the wife, my
informants told me, as his conduct in that respect is of no great impor-
586 tance. If he should change his religion, however, and become a Mos-
797 lem or a Christian, that is another matter, and the wife will immediately
be entitled to get rid of him on these grounds. In the previous case of
a *bag-ma* marriage, such a reason could not be held against the wife,
simply because she would never be authorized by her husbands to
change her religion. She would have to be divorced first in order to
do so.

586 A *mag-pa* husband can be released from his marriage to an heiress if notorious misconduct on her part is proved. I was told that a woman in this position who would be divorced in this way would find it very difficult to remarry, as "nobody would want an immoral woman as a wife, whatever the property she may have".

If a husband wants to divorce his *bag-ma* wife or a wife is inclined to turn out her *mag-pa* husband, both of these are liable, in accordance with Kashmir customary law, to give a sum of money, the equivalent of a cow, to the divorced person; the name of such a monetary amount is *Mo-skyur-ba* (*Mo-bSkyur-ba*) meaning "woman thrown out cow". If, on the other hand, the divorce occurs at the request of the *bag-ma* wife 586 or of the *mag-pa* husband, the equivalent in money of a horse will be given to the injured party. This is called *P'ho-skyur-ta* (*P'ho-bSkyur-rTa*) or "man thrown out horse". During the reign of the Tibetan kings of Western Tibet, real horses and cows were handed over. But with the accession of the Dogra masters, Wazir-i-Wazarat Akbar Ali Shah, [435] who ruled in Ladak in the early 1870s, converted the value of these animals into cash, a horse being estimated as worth Rs. 25, and a cow Rs. 12/8/–. Henceforward, compensation had to be paid in money and no longer in kind.

Extra-marital relations do occur in Ladak among polyandrous peo- 837 ple, but on the whole all my informants, including the Reverend W. Asboe, were very insistant that those who practised polyandry were more "moral" than the others who did not. They meant by this, that [626] the pressure of public opinion upon remaining faithful to the custom and not departing from what was expected of those living matrimonially in this fashion was very great and, usually, very effective in enforcing the rule.

In spite of this, it could not be said that departures from this moral [792] rule did not occur. Lamas who had taken vows of celibacy, such as the Gelug-pas for instance, were known occasionally to get involved in illicit love affairs. A woman who was thus a partner to the strayings of a lama was known as a *la-dud* (*bLa-aDrud*), "dragger away of lama".

Unmarried girls who took lovers might be forced to marry them, if 836 the man was unmarried. If he was already wed, he might have to divorce 837 and marry the girl, or simply give her the necessary means of livelihood. Should she have a child by him, she would be turned out of her family's [848] house and beaten, and the man would, in most instances, be obliged to marry her. The only exception could occur if he should already be married and have children, when he would have to arrange for the upkeep of his paramour and her child. As it was, this did not happen very often, all young girls normally being chaperoned when they attended public festivals. It was here that lovers met, it was admitted, but it would be difficult for an unmarried daughter, properly accompanied, to start an intrigue in this way.

Women living in polyandry did have lovers, I was told, because they 837 did not always feel the affection which they should have for their many 684 husbands. A *bag-ma* wife caught in the act would be beaten, driven out of the house and divorced, if she was not yet a mother. If she had children, she would not be driven away, but her paramour would be

837 beaten and obliged to pay compensation to the outraged husbands.
684 Sometimes, I heard, the lover, assisted by friends, resisted and a fight
ensued, in which the husbands' party might also be reinforced by friends
and relatives. In the end a third party would be brought in to arbitrate
and fix the amount of compensation due, if adultery was satisfactorily
proved.

In the case of a *mag-pa* wife, or a *mag-pa* husband, I have already
837 mentioned above, in what I wrote on divorce proceedings, what the
correct behaviour is in cases of the partners' infidelity.

As a rule, immorality is something that attempts are made to conceal,
and scandals do not occur often because everyone always tries to hush
them up. One of the chief difficulties that has to be faced, if such a
case becomes known and has to be dealt with in the glare of public
knowledge, is the problem of property. A guilty couple will have none
[735] to live on and, unless they can collect sufficient means to buy them-
selves at least a land tenancy, they will become beggars and be forced
to live on grudging public charity.

848 The fate of illegitimate children is also a sad one. In most cases,
851 hushing up the affair consists in considering a child born of an adul-
terous union as one of the family. Abortions are nevertheless often
847 resorted to, and in the case of unmarried girls frequently practised. In
Leh, Moslem barbers are those who perform these operations. Un-
wanted children begotten in this way are often done away with, too, by
the mother simply giving birth to the child near the river, and throwing
[792] it into the water to drown. This is often the case with nuns in monas-
teries, who should be chaste in accordance with their vows. Most il-
848 legitimate children who live to be adult, become lamas or nuns. The
792 principal reason for this is again that they have no property and cannot
736 marry. In this way, they can live off the resources of the monastery.

5. *Dissolution of marriage by death*

595 If the eldest husband of a woman dies, the widow is automatically the
736 official wife of the surviving eldest brother of the deceased, by inheri-
768 tance. No marriage ceremony need be performed. If the woman does
not like to live with this man and his younger brothers as she did during the lifetime of the eldest, but at the same time, does not like to leave the family household or to take yet another husband different from those she has had so far, or, again, if the surviving eldest brother does not wish to keep her as his wife, she is entitled in all these cases, to maintenance by the family. This takes the form of a piece of land

Ladak

called *Shrub-zhing* (*sGrub-zhing?*), that is a small field put aside to 595 268 supply her with some modest means of subsistance.

The widow of a deceased eldest brother is otherwise at liberty to [936] leave the house and family. But her choice must be made at once, at the death of her eldest husband; should she not avail herself of this opportunity, she remains the legal wife of the surviving brothers and she will lose her claim to separation, unless she formally divorces them later.

If a family of brothers, married in *bag-ma*, dies without issue, their 428 unmarried eldest sister is entitled to the inheritance, if she continues to live on the family property. If she is married in *bag-ma* elsewhere, she [586] can occasionally divorce in order to inherit the property. Otherwise, the next-of-kin who become the heirs are the father, the mother, the widow of the deceased (if she continues to reside in the family house), the eldest of agnates, the *p'ha-spun*, in that order of precedence.

Unless a widow inherits the property, she is only entitled to mainte- [936] nance during her lifetime. She will receive *To-zhing* if she is an only 595 or the eldest wife; if she is a second or other subsequent wife, she will 428 only receive *Shrub-zhing*. If, on the other hand, a widow inherits the property, she is entitled like an eldest daughter, to take a *mag-pa*; she must, however, hand on the ancestral property complete at her death, to the heirs which she may have with her new husband, or to the next-of-kin of her late husband who are entitled to receive the succession.

If an eldest daughter, who has inherited the family property, dies without issue, her *mag-pa* is entitled to succeed to it, provided that he marries a relative of his deceased wife's family. If he, again, has no children, after his death his second wife will inherit the property if she survives him. If she does not, the relatives of his first wife will be the heirs. An heiress may make a gift of property to her *mag-pa* during her lifetime, to make sure of his possession in case of her death. Such a gift is perfectly legal, and often takes place.

428 Self-acquired property, as opposed to ancestral property, can always [925] be made the object of a gift by a proprietor. He can also leave it by will to other heirs than his legal ones, despite the fact that he is not entitled to do this with family property. In some parts of Ladak (Tang- [932] tse), if a son is suffering from some incurable physical defect, a father is entitled to skip him and to arrange beforehand for some other heir to take his place.

114 6. *Personal field-work research*

595 After having gathered a certain amount of theoretical information of the kind which I have given above, I felt the necessity to go out and see things for myself. I asked Nono Tse-p'hün to take me to some of the polyandrous households which he knew in the neighbourhood of Leh, and he accepted readily enough.

(i) *Visits to polyandrous households*

595 Consequently, on the 30th of August 1938, we visited a family living
601 in polyandry in the immediate outskirts of the town. The name of the
house was *Tok-Tok* (possibly *Grogs-Grogs* or *T'hog-T'hog*) and consisted of two brothers living polyandrously, and of two of their sons by a first wife also living in this way. I give the genealogy which I made then, in Table 27, by way of illustration.

789 As we approached the Tok-Tok house I noticed a *Dö* (*mDos*) string
cross over the door to catch devils. I remarked upon it and heard that
342 in Ladak it is called a *namgo* (*rNam-mGo?*). The building was a typical
[353] Tibetan one, with a flat roof covered with fuel for the winter arranged
in packets round the edge, thick stone walls painted white, rectangular doors and windows, the lower part of the frame broader than the upper part, with coloured decorations and a piece of cloth hanging over the top part, a *lha-k'hang* (*lHa-K'hang*) or private chapel on the first floor with *chötens* visible through the window. We entered by the front gate which led into a yard and thence into a stable, from which a staircase
115 took us up to the first floor. It was there that we met the family, and
had our talk with our principal informant, the eldest father and former master of the household, Lobsang Tok-Tok.

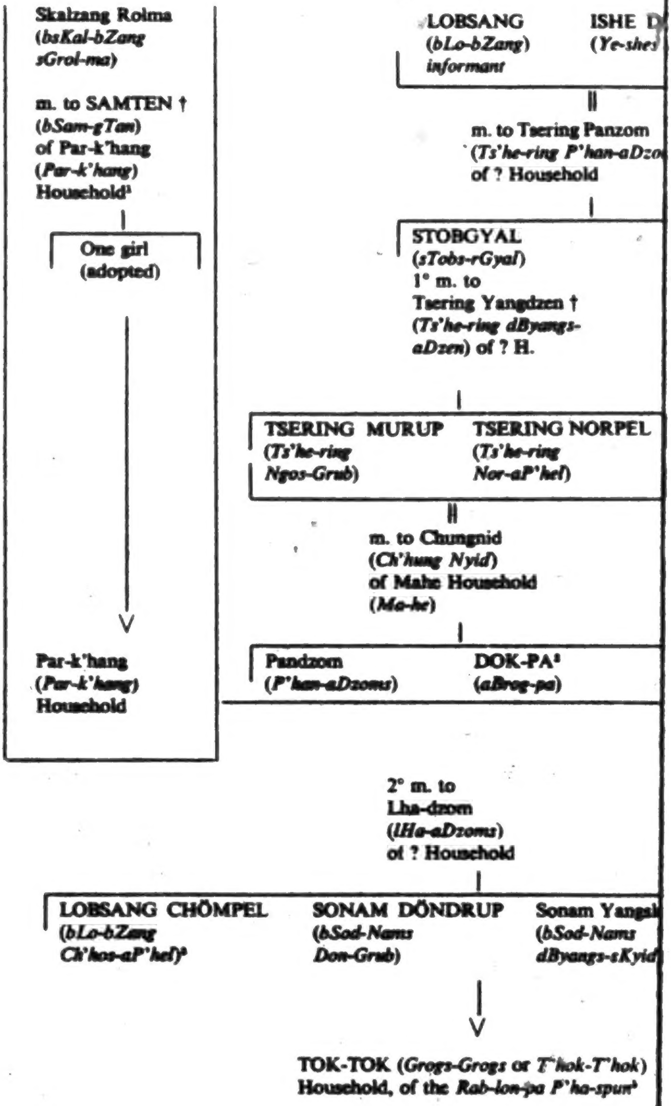
595 He told us that he and his brother, Ishe Döndrup, together with their
428 eldest sister, Skalzang Rolma, were the three children of a certain Ishe
Tok-Tok now dead. The sister had been married off in *bag-ma* to the now deceased son of the Par-k'hang house (meaning "Printing House"), Samten, with whom she had had no children. She had inherited the
[597] property at his death, and would be holding it as long as she lived, or
until the little girl she had adopted married and set herself up in the *k'hang-chen* as the heiress. This little girl belonged to the *p'ha-spun* of Skalzang Rolma's former husband and, for this reason, was entitled to inherit the Par-k'hang house.

591 Lobsang himself, a man in his sixties now, had been married poly-
595 andrously with his brother to a certain Tsering Panzom with whom they
888 had had two children, a son called Stobgyal and a girl, Ishe Palkid.

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

595
601

TABLE 27. GENEALOGY OF TOK-TOK (*Grogs-Grogs* or *T'h*


Skalzang Rolma (*bsKal-bZang sGrol-ma*)
m. to SAMTEN † (*bSam-gTan*) of Par-k'hang (*Par-k'hang*) Household[1]
One girl (adopted)
Par-k'hang (*Par-k'hang*) Household
LOBSANG (*bLo-bZang*) *informant*
ISHE D (*Ye-shes*
m. to Tsering Panzom (*Ts'he-ring P'han-aDzo* of ? Household
STOBGYAL (*sTobs-rGyal*) 1° m. to Tsering Yangdzen † (*Ts'he-ring dByangs-aDzen*) of ? H.
TSERING MURUP (*Ts'he-ring Ngos-Grub*)
TSERING NORPEL (*Ts'he-ring Nor-aP'hel*)
m. to Chungnid (*Ch'hung Nyid*) of Mahe Household (*Ma-he*)
Pandzom (*P'han-aDzoms*)
DOK-PA[2] (*aBrog-pa*)
2° m. to Lha-dzom (*lHa-aDzoms*) of ? Household
LOBSANG CHÖMPEL (*bLo-bZang Ch'hos-aP'hel*)[3]
SONAM DÖNDRUP (*bSod-Nams Don-Grub*)
Sonam Yangsk (*bSod-Nams dByangs-sKyid*
TOK-TOK (*Grogs-Grogs* or *T'hok-T'hok*) Household, of the *Rab-lon-pa P'ha-spun*[5]

---

[1] Skalzang Rolma is a widow and owns her late husband's house for the time being. She ha this child will inherit the Par-k'hang Household at the death of her mother by adoption, comes first.

[754] [2] This little boy has no real name yet; the one he bears means "nomad" and has been given to

[551] [3] He is a Gelug-pa lama, and lives in Lhasa.

[4] This little boy has also been given a provisional name, as above, for the same reason; (*aBrog-mo*) alternatively, meaning "female nomad".

[5] See list of Ladak *P'ha-spuns*.

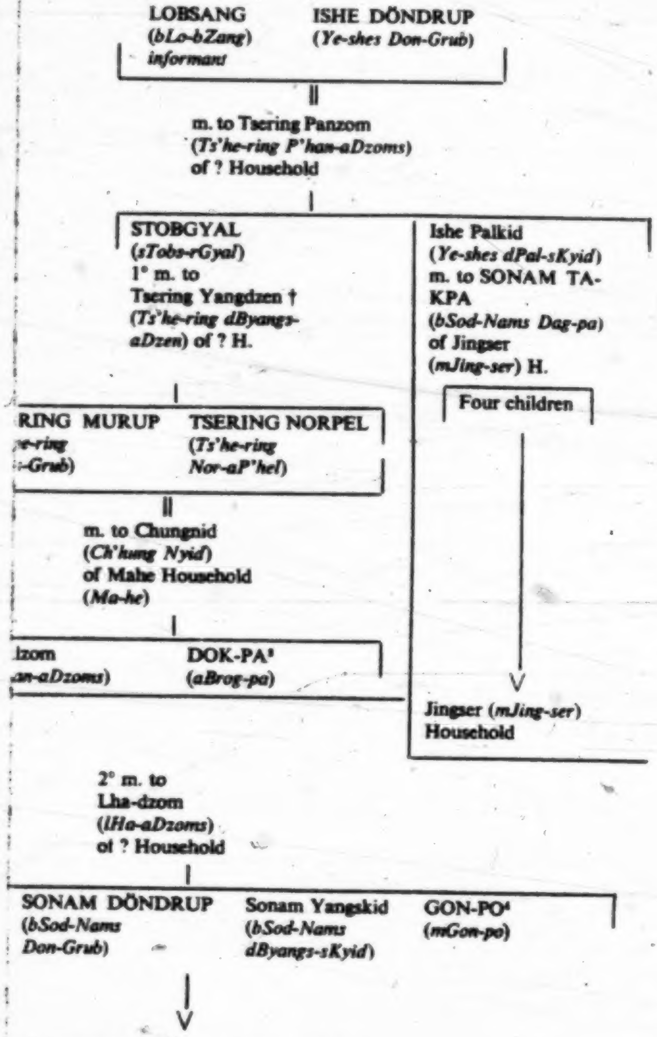
Capital letters denote males. Small characters are women. † = dead. m. = married. H. =

[Facing p. 360-A]

Ladak

OF TOK-TOK (*Grogs-Grogs* or *T'hok-T'hok*) HOUSEHOLD.

595
601


LOBSANG (bLo-bZang) informant
ISHE DÖNDRUP (Ye-shes Don-Grub)
m. to Tsering Panzom (Ts'he-ring P'han-aDzoms) of ? Household
STOBGYAL (sTobs-rGyal) 1° m. to Tsering Yangdzen † (Ts'he-ring dByangs-aDzen) of ? H.
Ishe Palkid (Ye-shes dPal-sKyid) m. to SONAM TAKPA (bSod-Nams Dag-pa) of Jingser (mJing-ser) H.
Four children
RING MURUP
e-ring
-Grub)
TSERING NORPEL (Ts'he-ring Nor-aP'hel)
m. to Chungnid (Ch'hung Nyid) of Mahe Household (Ma-he)
zom
an-aDzoms)
DOK-PA[3] (aBrog-pa)
Jingser (mJing-ser) Household
2° m. to Lha-dzom (lHa-aDzoms) of ? Household
SONAM DÖNDRUP (bSod-Nams Don-Grub)
Sonam Yangskid (bSod-Nams dByangs-sKyid)
GON-PO[4] (mGon-po)
TOK-TOK (Grogs-Grogs or T'hok-T'hok) Household, of the Rab-lon-pa P'ha-spun[5]

---

usband's house for the time being. She has adopted a little girl relative of her husband and
l at the death of her mother by adoption, or when she herself marries a *mag-pa*, whichever

ears means "nomad" and has been given to him provisionally to avert the evil eye from him. [054]

al name, as above, for the same reason; it means "protector". He is also called Dok-mo [551]
ad".

women. † = dead. m. = married. H. = Household

[facing p. 360-B]

The latter had been married off very early to Sonam of the Takpa 591
household, in *bag-ma*, and Stobgyal had taken Tsering Yangdzen as his 595
wife. He had then moved into the main part of the Tok-Tok house, 888
and the two fathers had taken up their quarters in two small rooms on the second floor. Stobgyal had had two sons with his first wife, Tsering Murup and Tsering Norpel, and these two boys had also married polyandrously to become the rightful occupants of the *k'hang-chen*. They, their wife Chungnid and their two small children, Pandzom and Dok-pa, lived on the first floor, while Stobgyal remained in his quarters, provisionally. It appeared that he had not yet moved into a *k'hang-gu* as he should have done, because he had remarried after having become a widower, and had had five children by his second wife, Lha-dzom.

With so many people about the house, I found conditions a bit stren- 595
uous. The kitchen held a certain number of the children, and Lha-dzom 123
was in there cooking. I went in to see her, but was soon driven out by [354]
the smoke, which had no chimney by which to escape, and filled the room down to about knee level. I did remain there for a short time to look round, with my head bent down to that height to keep my eyes from watering, but I soon gave it up and retreated to rejoin old Lobsang.
We went out to take a photograph in which he, his brother, their son, [126]
Chungnid, and Sonam Döndrup, Lha-dzom's second son, agreed to pose, the two last ones with Dok-pa and Gon-po in their arms (see Fig. 37).

Then we went in again, and sat down on carpets in the largest room on the first floor, which happened to be the one in which the *lha-k'hang* was, and had a cup of tea while we continued to discuss their family affairs. I enquired about their fields and the cultivation, the trade and their travels, and heard how their polyandry was regulated. It is from such information from these people and from others that I was able to get a clear picture of the conditions in which polyandry flourished in Ladak.

Lobsang Tok-Tok complained bitterly of the "immorality" of young 595
people in Leh. He said that polyandry was no longer desired by the 177
younger generation, and that this was all due to outside influence from Indian and Turki traders from Sinkiang, and from European missionaries and travellers who were perpetually speaking against the time-honoured custom of polyandrous matrimony such as Ladakis and Tibetans had always practised, and were introducing the "bad habit" of monogamous marriage.

He asked me how it was that we were so wealthy in Europe without

He asked me how it was that we were so wealthy in Europe without
595 being polyandrous. It seemed to him incomprehensible that one could
425 stay rich while dividing up the family property with each monogamous
428 marriage, as we do in our countries. It would be impossible to do this
[182] in Ladak, he said, because there would never be enough to go round, and everybody would quickly be reduced to famine.

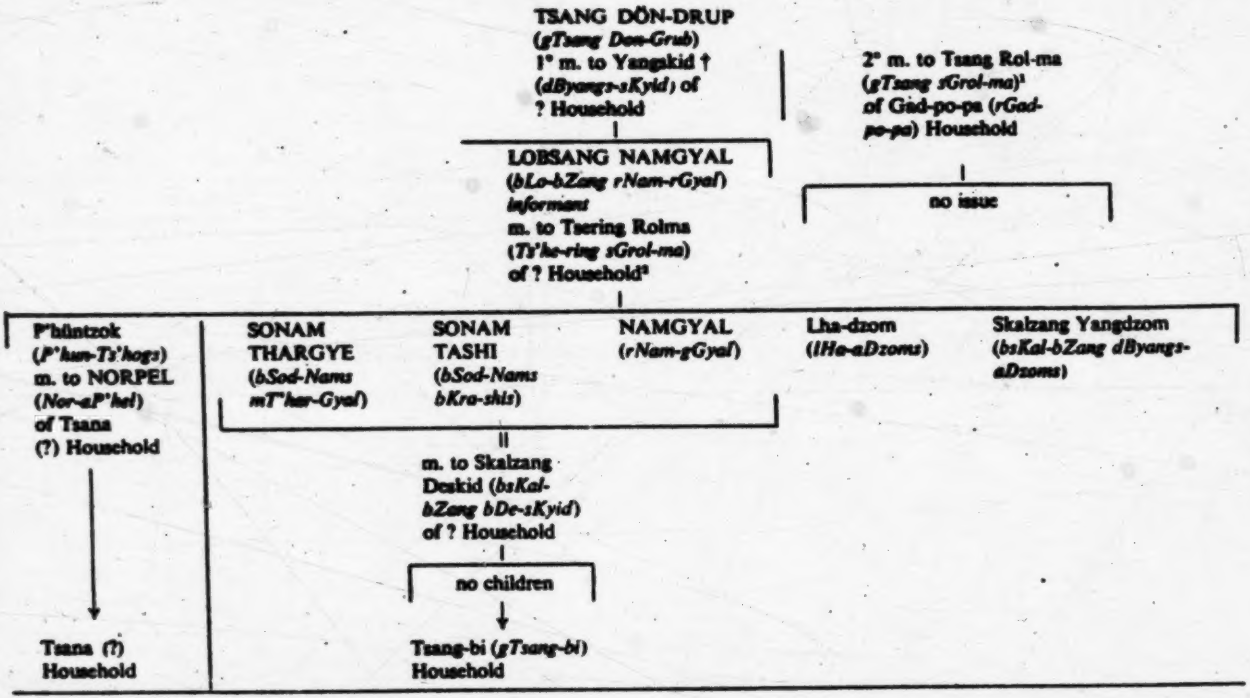
I must say that Lobsang Tok-Tok's question took me by surprise. In those days I had given no thought to this problem and it had never occurred to me yet that this might appear extraordinary to people living in polyandry. So I said that, now that I came to think of it, it was no doubt true that things were not the same with us. When we married, I said, each of us goes off with his wife and tries to fend for himself and build up a family life based on his own earnings. Of course, it meant tapping new sources of production, but then we did move away and were continually starting new enterprises in new places in order to be able to live.

Lobsang agreed that it would not be possible to do otherwise if one did not live in polyandry on the same piece of land, in the same household, generation after generation, without dividing it up. He had no-
595 ticed, he said, that those Ladakis who were converts to Mohammedan-
425 ism did the same as we did; they ceased, overnight, to be polyandrous,
428 and divided up the property immeliately they got married. The result
795 was that there was not enough to go round for all of them. The eldest brother remained on the best part of the land, and the others had to
[464] move away. They had to look for work, often as landless labourers, which was most depressing. He had noticed, too, that some of them even went further afield, and travelled all the way to Burma to work in the ruby mines there. Obviously, he concluded, they did so just as Europeans had to do, because they were monogamous, and even, in some cases, polygamous (polygynous).

595 Lobsang Tok-Tok was silent for a little while after this long dis-
123 course (which Nono Tse-P'hün translated for me) and I sat cross-legged
182 opposite him, a cup of tea in my hand, looking at his heavy, mongoloid frame and face (upon which some hair did, nevertheless, grow), and wondering who was doing the field-work, he or I. Then he said something again to my interpreter and shortly afterwards I heard in English what it was that he had said. It was that he could now grasp why Europeans had colonies throughout the world, why they came to India and even to Ladak. It was obviously because, with the family system that they had, they did not have enough to live on at home, and the fact that they did not practise polyandry led them to go overseas to seek

[Text continues on p. 364]

TABLE 28. GENEALOGY OF TSANG-BI (*gTsang-bi*) HOUSEHOLD.


TSANG DÖN-DRUP
(*gTsang Don-Grub*)
1° m. to Yangskid †
(*dByangs-sKyid*) of
? Household
2° m. to Tsang Rol-ma
(*gTsang sGrol-ma*)[1]
of Gad-po-pa (*rGad-po-pa*) Household
no issue
LOBSANG NAMGYAL
(*bLo-bZang rNam-rGyal*)
informant
m. to Tsering Rolma
(*Ts'he-ring sGrol-ma*)
of ? Household[2]
P'hüntzok
(*P'hun-Ts'hogs*)
m. to NORPEL
(*Nor-aP'hel*)
of Tsana
(?) Household
Tsana (?)
Household
SONAM
THARGYE
(*bSod-Nams*
mT'har-Gyal)
SONAM
TASHI
(*bSod-Nams*
bKra-shis)
NAMGYAL
(*rNam-gGyal*)
m. to Skalzang
Deskid (*bsKal-bZang bDe-sKyid*)
of ? Household
no children
Tsang-bi (*gTsang-bi*)
Household
Lha-dzom
(*lHa-aDzoms*)
Skalzang Yangdzom
(*bsKal-bZang dByangs-aDzoms*)

---

[1] Living in the *k'hang-gu*. See Table 32.

[2] Parents, five children and the wife of the three boys all living in the *k'hang-chen*.

Conventional signs as in Table 27.

595 a livelihood – like the Moslem Ladakis who went to Burma. I was, I
123 confess, considerably impressed by the old man's perspicacity. It was
182 also a lesson to me, and showed me better than anything else what
circumstances were like in this area of Tibetan culture, and how polyandry was connected, or appeared to be, with the economic necessities of the environment.

That same afternoon, we went on to visit another polyandrous family
595 living in a neighbouring house. Here, an elderly father, remarried to a
601 new wife after his first wife had died, lived in a *k'hang-gu* situated on the family grounds, very close to the ancestral house, the *k'hang-chen*. In the latter, his son by the deceased wife,[1] now lived with his wife and
[115] five of six children that the couple had had. This son was our informant, and apart from the polyandry in which the sons lived, I was
[888] interested to see how grandparents and parents resided separately. Their
[591] genealogy is to be found in Table 28.

541 Lobsang Namgyal's eldest daughter was married off in *bag-ma* to the eldest son of the Tsana household. His three sons were still very young
595 (the eldest only just eighteen) but were already married polyandrously
888 to Skalzang Deskid. She had no children yet, and I was told that they were waiting for her to have her first baby to put Lobsang Namgyal and his wife, Tsering Rolma, into a second *k'hang-gu*. This is some-
[425] times done in Ladak, instead of taking over from the parents directly
[428] after the wedding; it is as if the newly-married had no reason yet to
[585] become the official owners of the family property. The two younger daughters, still very small, would move into the new *k'hang-gu* with their parents, I was told, and would remain there until they were married out in *bag-ma*. Asked where the "small house" was into which father and mother would eventually move, I was informed that they would take the place of Tsang Dön-drup and his wife, Tsang Rolma. These two would then go to another *k'hang-gu* situated on another piece of ancestral land, and in which grandparents always resided in the Tsang-bi family. It was quite apparent that the different portions reserved for retiring elders were always the same, awaiting new occupants which the inexorable march of time brought to them.

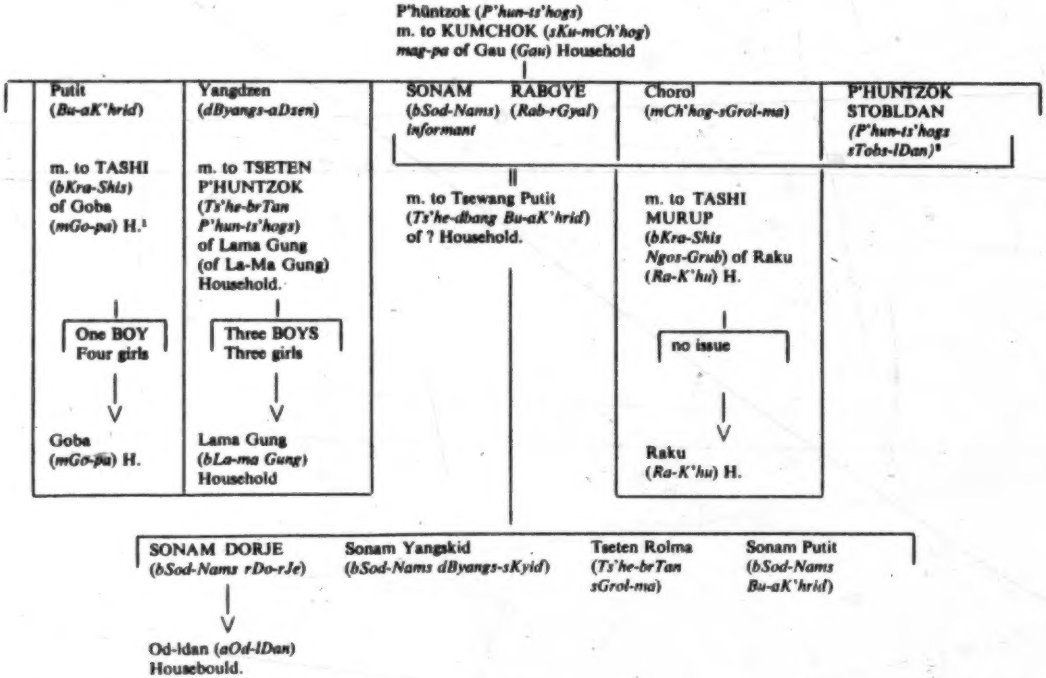
595 On the following day, August 31st 1938, Nono Tse-P'hün took me
to more polyandrous households of Leh. First, we visited a family
601 called *Od-ldan* (*aOd-lDan*) in which an heiress had married in *mag-pa*,
[888] and lived in the *k'hang-gu* while her three boys, living in polyandry,
[591] occupied the *k'hang-chen*. Their genealogy as I made it that day, is given in Table 29.

---

[1] [i.e., Lobsang Namgyal -- Analyst]

595
601

TABLE 29. GENEALOGY OF OD-LDAN (*aOd-lDan*) HOUSEHOLD.


P'hüntzok (*P'hun-ts'hogs*)
m. to KUMCHOK (*sKu-mCh'hog*)
mag-pa of Gau (*Gau*) Household
Putit (*Bu-aK'hrid*)
m. to TASHI (*bKra-Shis*) of Goba (*mGo-pa*) H.[1]
One BOY Four girls
Goba (*mGo-pa*) H.
Yangdzen (*dByangs-aDzen*)
m. to TSETEN P'HUNTZOK (*Ts'he-brTan P'hun-ts'hogs*) of Lama Gung (of La-Ma Gung) Household.
Three BOYS Three girls
Lama Gung (*bLa-ma Gung*) Household
SONAM (*bSod-Nams*) *informant*
RABGYE (*Rab-rGyal*)
Chorol (*mCh'hog-sGrol-ma*)
P'HUNTZOK STOBLDAN (*P'hun-ts'hogs sTobs-lDan*)[2]
m. to Tsewang Putit (*Ts'he-dbang Bu-aK'hrid*) of ? Household.
m. to TASHI MURUP (*bKra-Shis Ngos-Grub*) of Raku (*Ra-K'hu*) H.
no issue
Raku (*Ra-K'hu*) H.
SONAM DORJE (*bSod-Nams rDo-rJe*)
Od-ldan (*aOd-lDan*) Housebould.
Sonam Yangskid (*bSod-Nams dByangs-sKyid*)
Tseten Rolma (*Ts'he-brTan sGrol-ma*)
Sonam Putit (*bSod-Nams Bu-aK'hrid*)

[1] Tashi has two brothers, and Putit is married polyandrously to these, too.

[2] He is the third husband of Tsewang Putit.

Conventional signs as in Table 27.

595 Sonam, the eldest son of the heiress living in the little house on the
115 family property with her *mag-pa*, was our informant. He told us that
his mother and father had moved from the big house, in which he lived,
591 some ten years ago. With them, went the youngest sister, then still un-
888 married, Chorol. The two eldest sisters, Putit and Yangdzen, were already married out in *bag-ma* at the time. The eldest, Putit, was married in polyandry in the Goba household, and I asked Nono Tse-P'hün to take us on to that family next, which he did.

As soon as Sonam and his two brothers, Rabgye and P'huntzok
888 Stobldan, had married Tsewang Putit, they had taken the *k'hang-chen*
591 over. Very soon afterwards, Sonam Dorje, their eldest child and only son, now aged eight, was born, and subsequently they had had three daughters, now aged six, five and two respectively.

Chorol had only recently been married off in *bag-ma* to Tashi Murup of the Raku household; that was the reason for which she did not yet have any children.

P'hüntzok Stobldan, so Nono Tse-P'hün told me later, although the youngest husband of the common wife, whom he shared with his brothers, was not happy in polyandry. He wanted very much to leave and become the *mag-pa* husband of an heiress: the daughter of one Gyurmed (*aGyur-med*), the head of a household which I have marked down
114 in my notes as being called *Tiapa*. This must be a mistake, however,
194 as the sound *Tia* does not exist in Tibetan (it may perhaps be *Tra-pa*).

Tsewang Putit was standing outside the house, near the entrance gate to the compound, during the conversation which we had with her eldest husband just inside the main room. We went out again to take a group
595 photograph of the family (see Fig. 38), and when I had done this, I
85 turned and spoke to her through the interpreter. She was holding her
126 youngest child, the little girl, Sonam Putit, in her arms, and I asked if she could tell me who its father was.

She looked surprised and looked away. I insisted, but she shook her head, and Nono Tse P'hün said that she could not tell. I then suggested that she could surely calculate backwards as to who the father was, and find out who was with her at the probable time of conception. This was put to her, but she still refused to say. Finally, after the interpreter had teased her somewhat, and the husbands had laughed her into talking, she said that she was an honest woman, and did not have any preference. This seemed to satisfy Sonam and the others very much, for they shook their heads approvingly and looked at Nono Tse P'hün as he translated to me. It was obvious that Tsewang Putit had said the

Ladak

right thing. It was very characteristic of the morality of polyandrous 595
people in Ladak. I noticed, furthermore, in the Od-ldan househould, 851
that all fathers of the polyandrous family, Sonom, Rabgye and P'huntzok Stobldan, were called *ap'ha* (*A-p'ha*) "father" by their children, without there being made any distinction between elder, middle, or little father, as was more usual elsewhere.

That afternoon, we went on to visit the *Goba* (*mGo-pa*) household 591
close by. Here too, we found the parents in the *k'hang-gu* and the mar- 595
ried children living in polyandry, with their own children, in the *k'hang-* 888
chen. Putit of Od-ldan, who was the lady of the house here, received [115]
us and acted as informant. I made the genealogy of the family which I [601]
give here, in Table 30.

Two brothers, Lobsang and Ishe Dön-drup, were married polyandrously to Tashi Dzom-pa, whose household name I do not know. They had seven children and when the eldest boy, Tashi, got married, together with his two brothers, Padma and Sonam Tashi, to Putit of the Od-ldan household, they immediately left the *k'hang-chen* to them and went and lived in the *k'hang-gu*. They were there now, but we were unable to see them, as they had gone to Leh for the day. Lobsang was now dead, and Ishe Dön-drup lived alone with Tashi Dzompa. Their field was cultivated for them by their children of the *k'hang-chen*, so that the old people had a peaceful time.

They had always been alone in the *k'hang-gu*, as they had never had any unmarried daughters to stay with them. Ku-skid and Tsering Palkid were married off in *bag-ma* very early, so early in the case of the last daughter, that the informant could not give us the name of her husband.

The second son of the household, Stanzin, had not accepted Putit as a common wife, and had preferred to leave and go as a *mag-pa* to the heiress of a neighbouring house, Tsering Rolma of P'ho-la. It was difficult to get details from Putit about this and we did not press her, feeling that her reticence was natural. There was another *mag-pa* in the family, Dön-drup Sonam, who was married to Yangskid, heiress of the household which my notes have as Jigsten-pa.

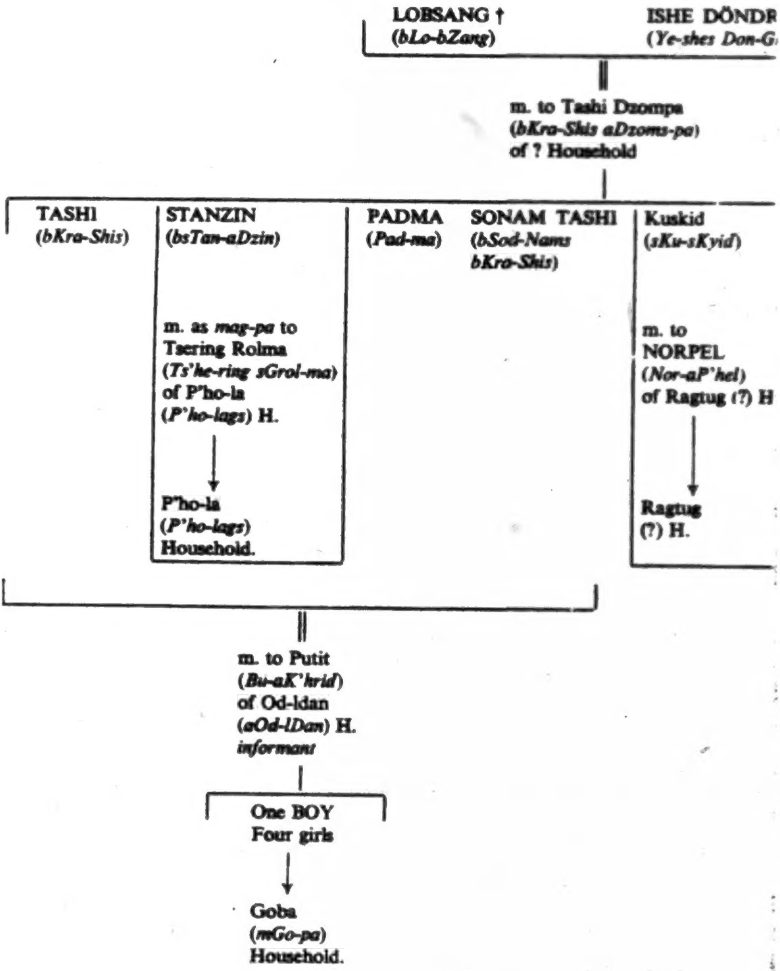
Putit herself had had five children with her three husbands, one boy and four girls, all of whom called their fathers *ap'ha* (*A-p'ha*), indiscriminately, as in the previous case.

On the 1st September 1938, I went to yet another polyandrous house- 595
hold of Leh, called *Mahe* (*Ma-he*). It, too, was in the outskirts of the 361
town and Nono Tse-P'hün and I found it at the end of a long passage between two walls delimitating fields, as is often the custom in Ladak.

Ladak

595
601

TABLE 30. GENEALOGY OF THE GOBA (*mGo-p*


LOBSANG †
(*bLo-bZang*)
ISHE DÖNDR
(*Ye-shes Don-G*
m. to Tashi Dzompa
(*bKra-Shis aDzoms-pa*)
of ? Household
TASHI
(*bKra-Shis*)
STANZIN
(*bsTan-aDzin*)
m. as *mag-pa* to
Tsering Rolma
(*Ts'he-ring sGrol-ma*)
of P'ho-la
(*P'ho-lags*) H.
P'ho-la
(*P'ho-lags*)
Household.
PADMA
(*Pad-ma*)
SONAM TASHI
(*bSod-Nams
bKra-Shis*)
Kuskid
(*sKu-sKyid*)
m. to
NORPEL
(*Nor-aP'hel*)
of Ragtug (?) H
Ragtug
(?) H.
m. to Putit
(*Bu-aK'hrid*)
of Od-ldan
(*aOd-lDan*) H.
informant
One BOY
Four girls
Goba
(*mGo-pa*)
Household.

---

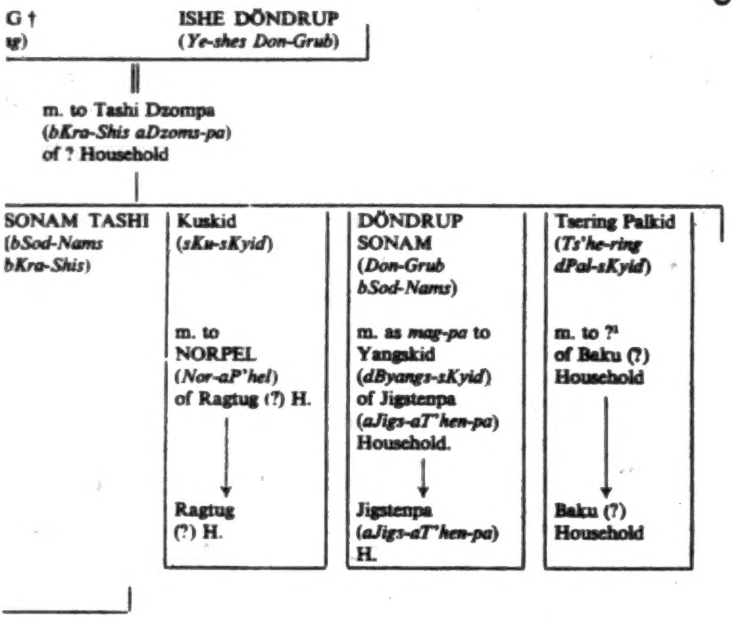
[1] Name unknown because Tsering Palkid was married off in *bag-ma* so early that it is alle
Conventional signs as in Table 27.

[facing P. 367-A]

Ladak

595
601

GY OF THE GOBA (*mGo-pa*) HOUSEHOLD.


G †
g)
ISHE DÖNDRUP
(*Ye-shes Don-Grub*)
m. to Tashi Dzompa
(*bKra-Shis aDzoms-pa*)
of ? Household
SONAM TASHI
(*bSod-Nams bKra-Shis*)
Kuskid
(*sKu-sKyid*)
m. to NORPEL
(*Nor-aP'hel*)
of Ragtug (?) H.
Ragtug (?) H.
DÖNDRUP SONAM
(*Don-Grub bSod-Nams*)
m. as *mag-pa* to Yangskid
(*dByangs-sKyid*)
of Jigstenpa
(*aJigs-aT'hen-pa*)
Household.
Jigstenpa
(*aJigs-aT'hen-pa*)
H.
Tsering Palkid
(*Ts'he-ring dPal-sKyid*)
m. to ?[1]
of Baku (?)
Household
Baku (?)
Household

off in *bag-ma* so early that it is allegedly not remembered.

[facing p. 367-B]

591 There was an entrance gate, a yard with a stable, a first floor with a
595 *lha-k'hang*, as is usual. In this house which constituted the *k'hang-chen*,
we found a family of two men, their common wife and three boys, as
[351] well as a divorced sister of the brothers. At the end of the field, attain-
[888] ing to the house, was a smaller building, with a field of its own. This
was the *k'hang-gu*, and in it were the parents of the men. These parents
consisted of a decrepit old hag and her three old husbands, and they
had been living there for some six years already. The eldest of the men
595 in the *k'hang-chen*, named Sonam Tsewang, acted as the informant,
601 and it was with him that I made the genealogical tree of the family as
[115] shown here in Table 31.

The eldest sister of the fathers in the *k'hang-gu* was dead, it seemed. She had been married off in *bag-ma* to two brothers of a household called Chubipa, and she had had sons to continue the line there. The three brothers had married one woman called Sonam Putit – the old hag who was living with the men -- and these people had had five children, three daughters and two boys.

595 The eldest daughter, Tsewang Palmo, had fallen in love and married
[199] a Christian called Dorge, much to her family's displeasure, not so much
because of the difference in religion, but because, being a convert of
the mission, he had no land of his own (he had been excluded by his
own family) and had to work as a peon. The second daughter, Standzin
[586] Rolma, had married into a household called Kushu but had since di-
vorced and had returned to her brothers. She now lived in the *k'hang-
chen* as is the custom, and her brothers had to see to it that she was
maintained. I was not able to find out under what circumstances she
divorced.

The two boys, Sonam Tsewang and Skalzang, were married polyandrously with a woman named Ishe Rolma. They had three boys with her, and the continuity of the Mahe household through males was thus assured. A sister, born between the birthdays of the two men, called Chungnid, was the one we had met at the Tok-Tok household on the 30th of August. She was married polyandrously in *bag-ma* there to the two sons of Stobgye, Tsering Murup and Tsering Norpel.

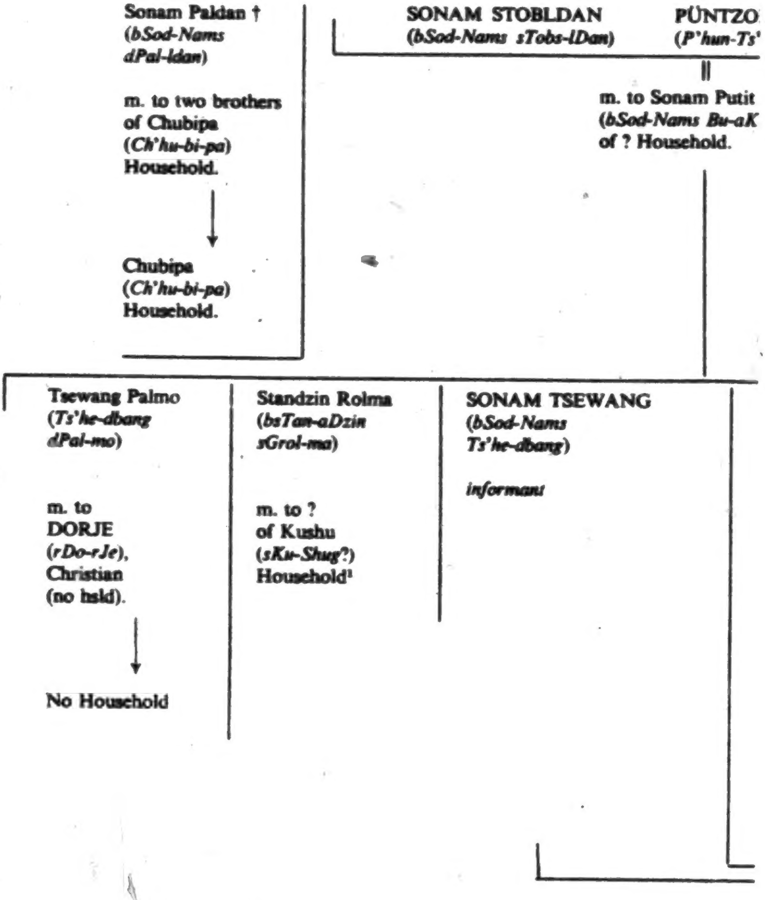
595 We spent the afternoon of the same day at the house of an *amchi*
759 or native Tibetan doctor, the *Gadpo-pa* (*rGad-po-pa*) Household. There
601 was only a grandmother alive in this house, and she lived in the *k'hang-
[888] gu* reserved for her. The son, Chonde, who was a doctor, lived in a
[463] larger *k'hang-gu* than usual, because, as an *amchi*, he had private
means and could add to the small home as he wanted. Actually, the

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4

Ladak

TABLE 31. GENEALOGY OF MAHE (*Ma-he*)

595
601


Sonam Paldan †
(*bSod-Nams dPal-ldan*)
m. to two brothers of Chubipa (*Ch'hu-bi-pa*) Household.
Chubipa (*Ch'hu-bi-pa*) Household.
SONAM STOBLDAN
(*bSod-Nams sTobs-lDan*)
PÜNTZO
(*P'hun-Ts'*
m. to Sonam Putit
(*bSod-Nams Bu-aK*
of ? Household.
Tsewang Palmo
(*Ts'he-dbang dPal-mo*)
m. to DORJE (*rDo-rJe*), Christian (no hsld).
No Household
Standzin Rolma
(*bsTan-aDzin sGrol-ma*)
m. to ? of Kushu (*sKu-Shug*?) Household[1]
SONAM TSEWANG
(*bSod-Nams Ts'he-dbang*)
informant

---

[1] She has divorced her husband and has returned to live with her brothers.

[2] See Table 27.

Conventional signs as in Table 27.

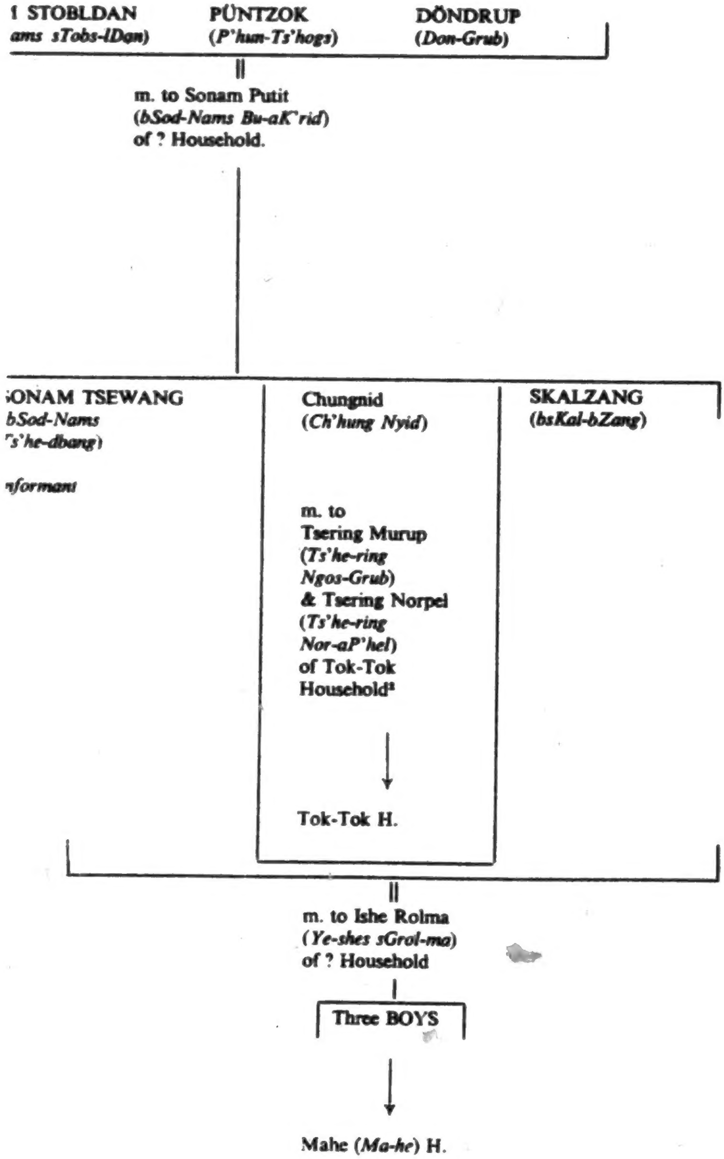
[facing p. 368-A]

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4

Ladak

LOGY OF MAHE (*Ma-he*) HOUSEHOLD.

595
601



1 STOBLDAN
ams sTobs-lDan)
PÜNTZOK
(P'hun-Ts'hogs)
DÖNDRUP
(Don-Grub)
m. to Sonam Putit
(bSod-Nams Bu-aK'rid)
of ? Household.
ONAM TSEWANG
bSod-Nams
's'he-dbang)
nformant
Chungnid
(Ch'hung Nyid)
m. to
Tsering Murup
(Ts'he-ring
Ngos-Grub)
& Tsering Norpel
(Ts'he-ring
Nor-aP'hel)
of Tok-Tok
Household[1]
Tok-Tok H.
SKALZANG
(bsKal-bZang)
m. to Ishe Rolma
(Ye-shes sGrol-ma)
of ? Household
Three BOYS
Mahe (Ma-he) H.

e with her brothers.

[facing P. 368-B]

601

profession is hereditary, and although the other members of the family 595
lived as peasants, one of the sons, usually the eldest, was educated as a [059]
doctor and became proficient in the trade, extra to the otherwise habit- [463]
ual agricultural work.

In the *k'hang-chen*, we found no less than four married men, sharing a very young wife (I was told that she was only fifteen, but considering that she had five children already, I feel that this could not have been true). The genealogy of the family is given here in Table 32.

The informant, Chonde, had two sisters, one older and one younger. 595
They were both married off in *bag-ma*, and the youngest proved to be [115]
Tsewang Rolma whom we had met in the Tsang-bi Household, where
she was wed to Tsang Dondrup as his second wife.

Of the informant's children, one, the third, had became a lama, while the fifth had preferred to go and be the *mag-pa* of the Amchi family (a related doctor's household, but bearing the name of the trade as a patronimic) than to remain at home with his brothers and share their common wife.

I did not visit another polyandrous household and make its genealogy
until the 17th September 1938. And when I did so, it was at Chushod, [162]
opposite Leh, on the left bank of the Indus. Most of the inhabitants of
this town are Musulmans, but there are a few Buddhist famililes among
them, and it was interesting to see how they had retained their customs,
including polyandry.

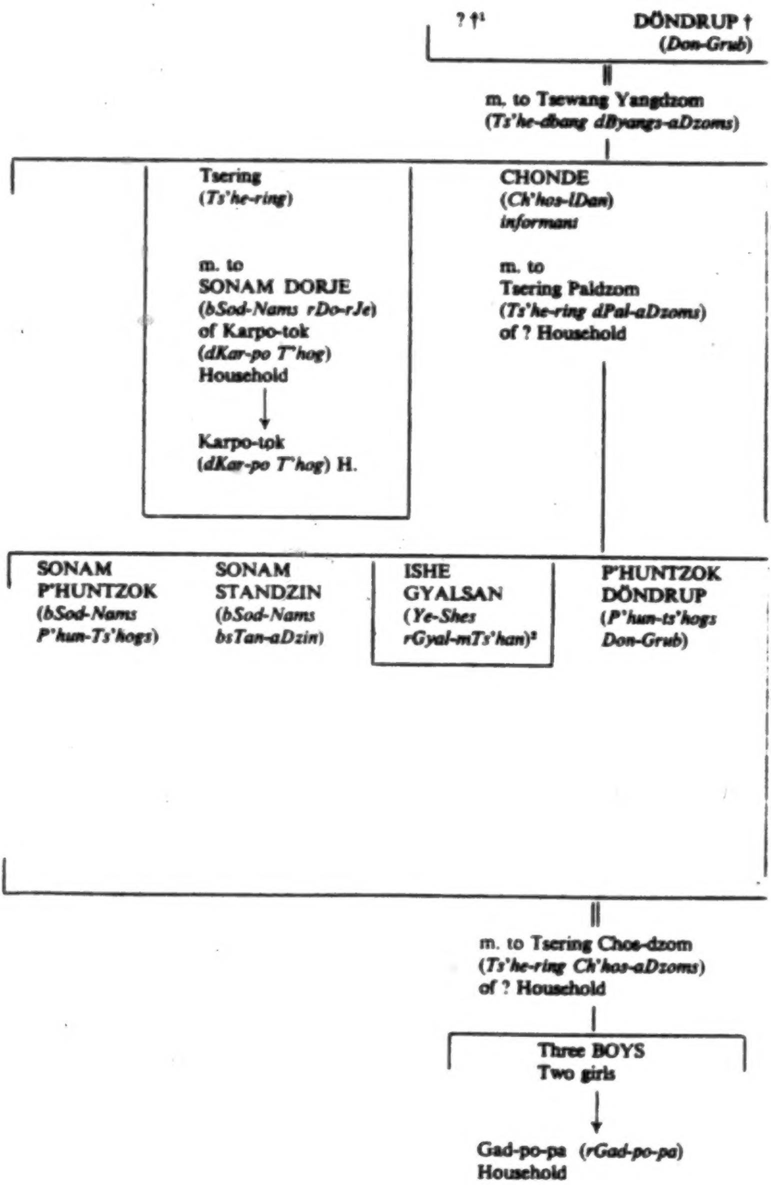
The family which Nono Tse-P'hün had specially brought me to see, 595
however, was one in which there was a *porjag*, that is an extra man 601
brought in when the husband or husbands fail to produce a child with [842]
their wife. The household name of this family was *Shing-k'hang pa*
(*Shing-K'hang-pa*), and it consisted of only one man and his wife,
Rigzin and Ishe Palkid, to which a younger man, the *porjag*, called
Paldan, had been added. I made their genealogy, which I give in Table
33. It will be seen that other members of the household had left it to
marry outside: Ngawang Standzin to become a lama, another brother
of Rigzin, Skalzang, to become a *mag-pa*, a sister, now called Amina,
who, having married a Musulman and changed her religion, was not
considered to be part of the Buddhist community any longer, and Ishe
Paljor, the youngest, who was a *porjag* in the Bata household (see
Table 34).

The *k'hang-gu* in the fields of this household stood empty, its oc- 595
cupants, Rigzin's parents, P'huntzok and Paldzom, being dead now.
The *k'hang-chen* which we visited was a house of normal Ladaki pro-

Ladak

595
601

TABLE 32. GENEALOGY OF THE GAD-PO-PA (*rGa*


? †[1]
DÖNDRUP †
(*Don-Grub*)
m. to Tsewang Yangdzom
(*Ts'he-dbang dByangs-aDzoms*)
Tsering
(*Ts'he-ring*)
m. to
SONAM DORJE
(*bSod-Nams rDo-rJe*)
of Karpo-tok
(*dKar-po T'hog*)
Household
Karpo-tok
(*dKar-po T'hog*) H.
CHONDE
(*Ch'hos-lDan*)
informant
m. to
Tsering Paldzom
(*Ts'he-ring dPal-aDzoms*)
of ? Household
SONAM
P'HUNTZOK
(*bSod-Nams*
P'hun-Ts'hogs)
SONAM
STANDZIN
(*bSod-Nams*
bsTan-aDzin)
ISHE
GYALSAN
(*Ye-Shes*
rGyal-mTs'han)[2]
P'HUNTZOK
DÖNDRUP
(*P'hun-ts'hogs*
Don-Grub)
m. to Tsering Choe-dzom
(*Ts'he-ring Ch'hos-aDzoms*)
of ? Household
Three BOYS
Two girls
Gad-po-pa (*rGad-po-pa*)
Household

---

[1] Name unreadable in my notes.

[2] Has become a Gelug-pa lama in the Sankar gompa.

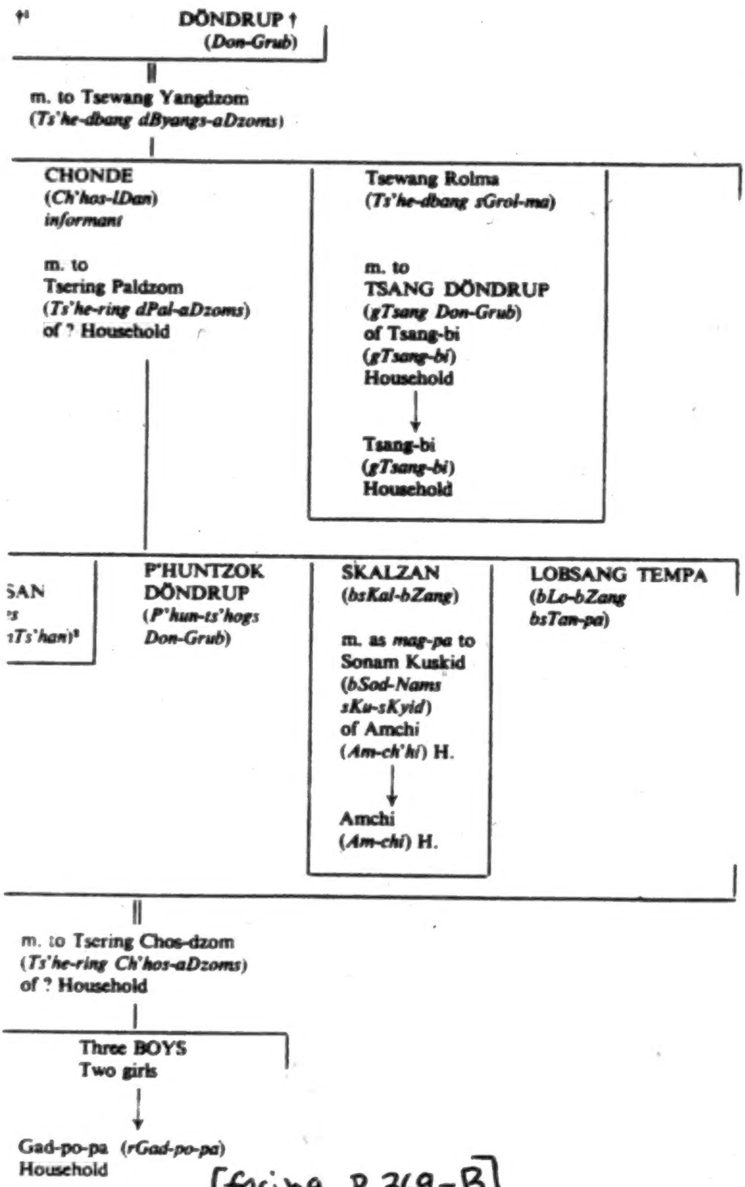
Conventional signs as in Table 27.

[facing P. 369-A]

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

595
601

OF THE GAD-PO-PA (*rGad-po-pa*) HOUSEHOLD.


†¹
DÖNDRUP †
(*Don-Grub*)
m. to Tsewang Yangdzom
(*Ts'he-dbang dByangs-aDzoms*)
CHONDE
(*Ch'hos-lDan*)
informant
m. to
Tsering Paldzom
(*Ts'he-ring dPal-aDzoms*)
of ? Household
Tsewang Rolma
(*Ts'he-dbang sGrol-ma*)
m. to
TSANG DÖNDRUP
(*gTsang Don-Grub*)
of Tsang-bi
(*gTsang-bi*)
Household
Tsang-bi
(*gTsang-bi*)
Household
SAN
s
ıTs'han)²
P'HUNTZOK
DÖNDRUP
(*P'hun-ts'hogs*
Don-Grub)
SKALZAN
(*bsKal-bZang*)
m. as *mag-pa* to
Sonam Kuskid
(*bSod-Nams*
sKu-sKyid)
of Amchi
(*Am-ch'hi*) H.
Amchi
(*Am-chi*) H.
LOBSANG TEMPA
(*bLo-bZang*
bsTan-pa)
m. to Tsering Chos-dzom
(*Ts'he-ring Ch'hos-aDzoms*)
of ? Household
Three BOYS
Two girls
Gad-po-pa (*rGad-po-pa*)
Household

[facing P. 369-B]

595 portions, although rather poorer than those of Leh, the inhabitants of Chushod not being so well off as those of the Ladaki capital. I was struck by the untidy, dirty and miserable appearance of those whom we interviewed. None of them acted specially as informant, Nono Tse-P'hün putting his questions to all three of the occupants of the *k'hang-chen*.

595 842 Ishe Palkid's story was that she had been married at 21 and that she had had a child almost immediately but which was, unfortunately, still-born. She had then waited for five years, and as she did not have another baby, and also because Rigzin was alone to cultivate the fields, she agreed to her husband's proposal that Paldan of the Tagchod household should be called in. He was the youngest son of that family, and agreed to join the couple in his double role of extra cultivator and sire to the descendence of the Shing-k'hang household. Seven years had now passed since he had come, but Ishe Palkid did not conceive again. In [599] desperation, they were thinking now of adopting a child, and their choice had already fallen upon one of the sons of Skalzan of the Shingo-pa household.

Upon enquiry, I found that the *porjag* was looked upon exactly as if he were a brother of Rigzin and that this polyandry, which was not fraternal, was, in fact, effectively treated as if it were so. Everything belonging to Rigzin in the house was now shared with the *porjag*, Paldan, who was a *de facto* joint proprietor of the Shing-k'hang-pa property. Paldan was some seven years younger than the wife, having been married to her when he was only nineteen. Rigzin, from a Ladaki point of view even, was not old and quite able to work. He was approximately thirty five, and in good health. But he did not seem able to cultivate the land as he should, and needed another man to help him, he said.

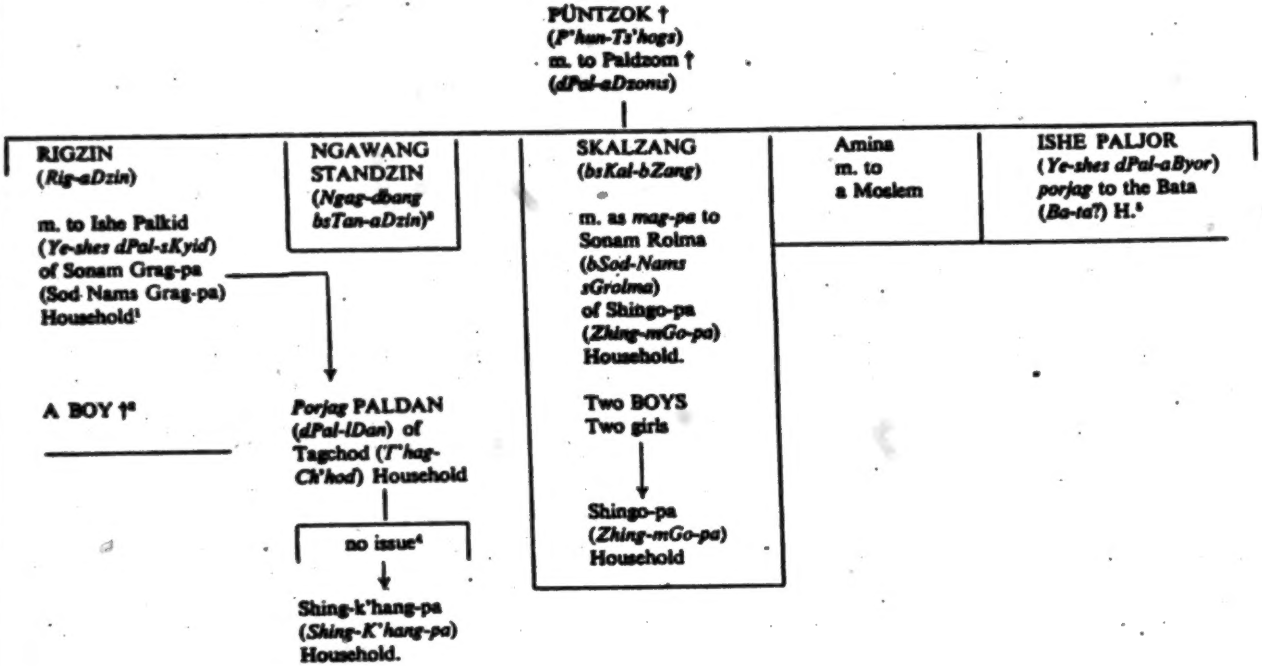
594 114 On the 18th September 1938, that is the next day, we went and saw another household, near Leh, in which there was also a *porjag*. It was in a family called *Bata* (*Ba-ta?*) and as things turned out, the genealogy which I made there proved to be the most representative of all those I made in Ladak; it is the one with the greatest variety of cases, showing all the different aspects of the way the social system functions among those polyandrous people.

I have already published this genealogy, the genealogy of the *Tsong-k'har-pa* (*Btsong-mK'har-pa*) household, in *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Ser. II, vol. 10, April 1948, No. 6, under the title "Tibetan, Toda and Tiya Polyandry: a Report of Field Investigation". It appears on page 215 of the above publication, but in the

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 372]

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak
595
601

TABLE 33. GENEALOGY OF THE SHING-K'HANG-PA (*Shing-K'hang-pa*) HOUSEHOLD.


PÜNTZOK †
(*P'hun-Ts'hogs*)
m. to Paldzom †
(*dPal-aDzoms*)
RIGZIN
(*Rig-aDzin*)
m. to Ishe Palkid
(*Ye-shes dPal-sKyid*)
of Sonam Grag-pa
(Sod Nams Grag-pa)
Household[1]
A BOY †[2]
NGAWANG
STANDZIN
(*Ngag-dbang bsTan-aDzin*)[3]
Porjag PALDAN
(*dPal-lDan*) of
Tagchod (*T'hag-Ch'hod*) Household
no issue[4]
Shing-k'hang-pa
(*Shing-K'hang-pa*)
Household.
SKALZANG
(*bsKal-bZang*)
m. as *mag-pa* to
Sonam Rolma
(*bSod-Nams sGrolma*)
of Shingo-pa
(*Zhing-mGo-pa*)
Household.
Two BOYS
Two girls
Shingo-pa
(*Zhing-mGo-pa*)
Household
Amina
m. to
a Moslem
ISHE PALJOR
(*Ye-shes dPal-aByor*)
porjag to the Bata
(*Ba-ta*?) H.[5]

[1] Ishe Palkid was married when she was twenty-one years old.
[2] The child was still-born.
[3] A lama.
[4] They are thinking of adopting a child to continue the household.
[5] See Table 34.
Conventional signs as in Table 27.

595 form which I gave it then. I have since learned Tibetan, and I had the
114 good fortune to be able to review it with my Ladaki informant, Nono
Tse-P'hün, in Kalimpong, on the 3rd December 1953, so that I have
made many corrections in the spelling, and have given what now appears to be the correct orthography of the names.

The Bata household was situated quite close to Leh, in the immediate
595 vicinity, like the first families which we visited: It consisted of four
601 people, one elderly man called Döndrup, his son Murup, the latter's
[115] wife Palkid, and her *porjag* whose name was Paljor; he was the youngest of the Shing-k'hang-pa household which we had examined earlier,
and the genealogy of which is given in Table 33. All these people acted
as informants, Nono Tse-P'hün gathering information for me not from
only one of them but rather from them all together as they stood outside their house and talked with us. They all lived in the Bata *k'hang-*
[591] *chen*, there being no reason, as we shall see, for Döndrup, the elder,
to go to a *k'hang-gu*. The house was of the usual type, standing close
to the cultivations. We remained outside, and spoke to these people in
[126] the field, as can be seen from the photograph (Fig. 41), which I took
at the conclusion of the interview.

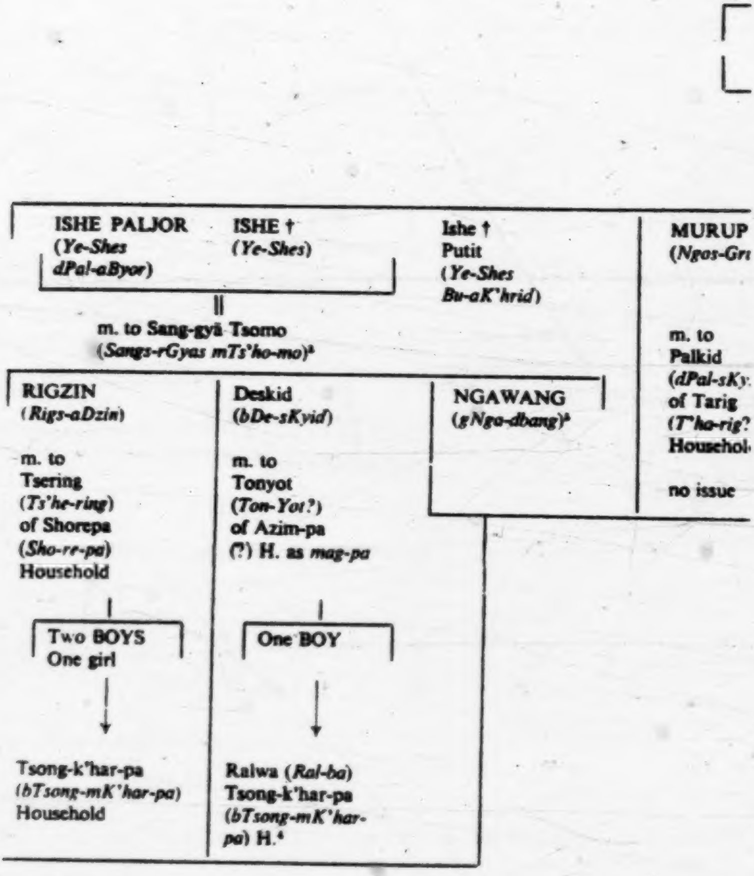
In Table 34, in which the genealogy of the *Tsong-k'har-pa* (*bTsong-mK'har-pa*) household is given, it will be seen that the Bata household grew out of it in the following way. Döndrup's father, Tsong-gu Malik, now dead, was married to a woman called Sonam of the Bata household, one which was well-known in Leh. They had three children, all boys, of whom Döndrup was the youngest. With the elder brothers, P'hüntzok and Pe-leg, he married polyandrously a woman named Putit of P'ho-sang household. And with this common wife, the brothers had no less than twelve children, of whom six died and six survived.

Döndrup's mother, Sonam, died after all her brothers, and no heirs
[428] remained for the Bata household from which she had come; none were
even adopted it seemed. For this reason, after P'hüntzok and Pe-leg
had taken over the *k'hang-chen* of the Tsong-k'har-pa house, Döndrup
was made heir to the Bata household, that is the one of his mother.
He went and lived there immediately, and the sons he had with his
brothers' common wife, helped him to cultivate the land there.

The eldest of these boys, Ishe Paljor, together with his brother, Ishe
[797] (now dead), then married a certain Moslem woman, who took the name
[553] Senghe Tsomo when she became Buddhist (as she should to marry
[591] Buddhists). These children then took over the *k'hang-chen*, and P'hüntzok and Pe-leg moved into the *k'hang-gu* at Tsong-k'har-pa. A third

TABLE 34. GENEALOGY OF TSONG-K'HAR-PA (*bTsong-mK'har-pa*)

595
601


ISHE PALJOR
(Ye-Shes dPal-aByor)
ISHE †
(Ye-Shes)
m. to Sang-gyā Tsomo
(Sangs-rGyas mTs'ho-mo)[3]
Ishe †
Putit
(Ye-Shes Bu-aK'hrid)
MURUP
(Ngos-Gr
m. to
Palkid
(dPal-sKy
of Tarig
(T'ho-rig?
Househol
no issue
RIGZIN
(Rigs-aDzin)
m. to
Tsering
(Ts'he-ring)
of Shorepa
(Sho-re-pa)
Household
Two BOYS
One girl
Tsong-k'har-pa
(bTsong-mK'har-pa)
Household
Deskid
(bDe-sKyid)
m. to
Tonyot
(Ton-Yot?)
of Azim-pa
(?) H. as mag-pa
One BOY
Ralwa (Ral-ba)
Tsong-k'har-pa
(bTsong-mK'har-pa) H.[4]
NGAWANG
(gNga-dbang)[3]

---

[551]. "Little Tsong king", obviously a nickname with a Moslem connotation (Malik = Arabic for "king").

[2] Dondrup received the Bata household, as all his mother's brothers died without heirs.

[3] She was a Moslem, but changed religion and name to marry her husband.

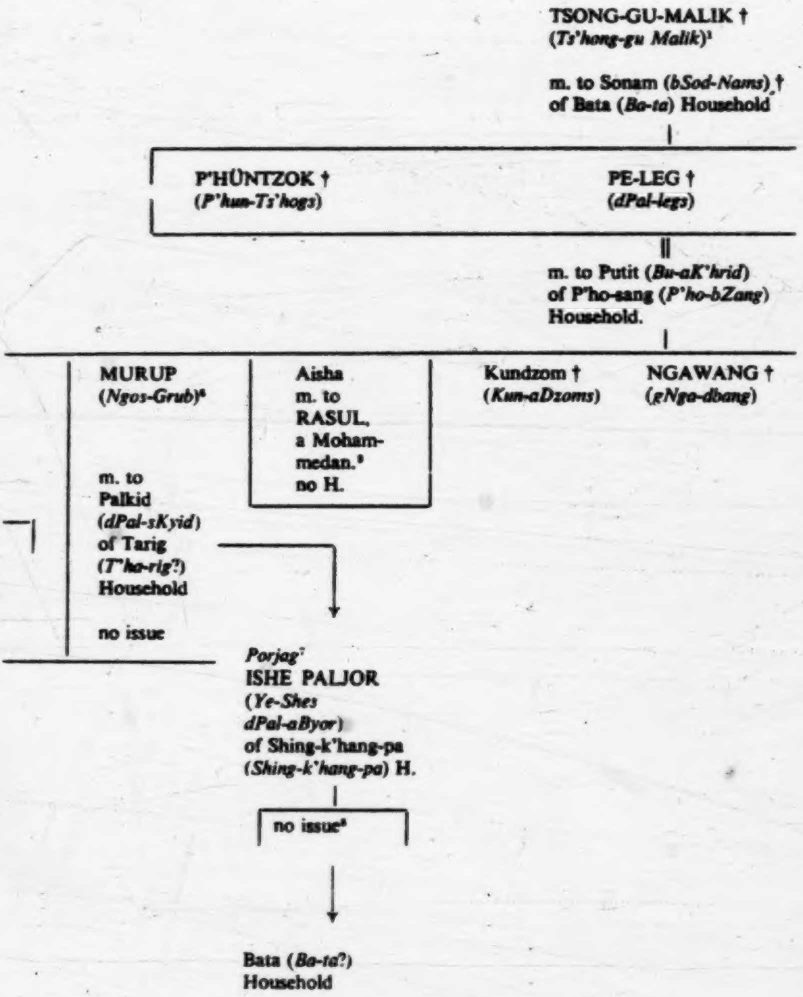
Conventional signs as in Table 27.

[facing p. 372-A]

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

Tsong-mK'har-pa) HOUSEHOLD.

595
601
[551]


TSONG-GU-MALIK †
(*Ts'hong-gu Malik*)¹
m. to Sonam (*bSod-Nams*) †
of Bata (*Ba-ta*) Household
P'HÜNTZOK †
(*P'hun-Ts'hogs*)
PE-LEG †
(*dPal-legs*)
m. to Putit (*Bu-aK'hrid*)
of P'ho-sang (*P'ho-bZang*)
Household.
MURUP
(*Ngos-Grub*)⁴
m. to
Palkid
(*dPal-sKyid*)
of Tarig
(*T'ha-rig?*)
Household
no issue
Aisha
m. to
RASUL,
a Moham-
medan.⁵
no H.
Kundzom †
(*Kun-aDzoms*)
NGAWANG †
(*gNga-dbang*)
*Porjag*⁷
ISHE PALJOR
(*Ye-Shes*
dPal-aByor)
of Shing-k'hang-pa
(*Shing-k'hang-pa*) H.
no issue⁶
Bata (*Ba-ta?*)
Household

---

otation (Malik =

ers died without

husband.

[4] Deskid was a tenant without occupation on some land *mag-pa* ad founded the Ralwa Tsong-k'har-pa H.

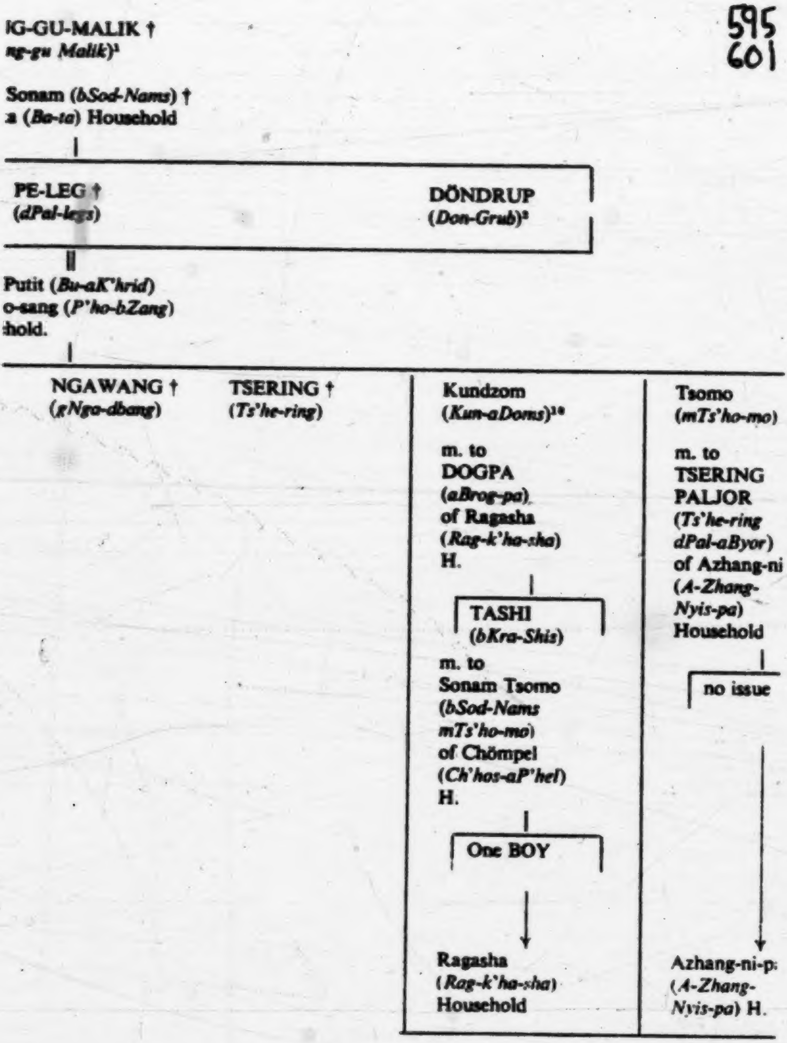
[5] He is a lama at Himis gompa.

[6] Murup received the Bata H. and continued it, while Ish the Tsong-k'har-pa Household.

[facing P. 392-B]

Ladak

595
601


IG-GU-MALIK †
ng-gu Malik)[1]
Sonam (bSod-Nams) †
a (Ba-ta) Household
PE-LEG †
(dPal-legs)
DÖNDRUP
(Don-Grub)[2]
Putit (Bu-aK'hrid)
o-sang (P'ho-bZang)
hold.
NGAWANG †
(gNga-dbang)
TSERING †
(Ts'he-ring)
Kundzom
(Kun-aDoms)[10]
m. to
DOGPA
(aBrog-pa)
of Ragasha
(Rag-k'ha-sha)
H.
TASHI
(bKra-Shis)
m. to
Sonam Tsomo
(bSod-Nams
mTs'ho-mo)
of Chömpel
(Ch'hos-aP'hel)
H.
One BOY
Ragasha
(Rag-k'ha-sha)
Household
Tsomo
(mTs'ho-mo)
m. to
TSERING
PALJOR
(Ts'he-ring
dPal-aByor)
of Azhang-ni
(A-Zhang-
Nyis-pa)
Household
no issue
Azhang-ni-p
(A-Zhang-
Nyis-pa) H.

---

ccupation on some land of her brother: she took a Tsong-k'har-pa H.

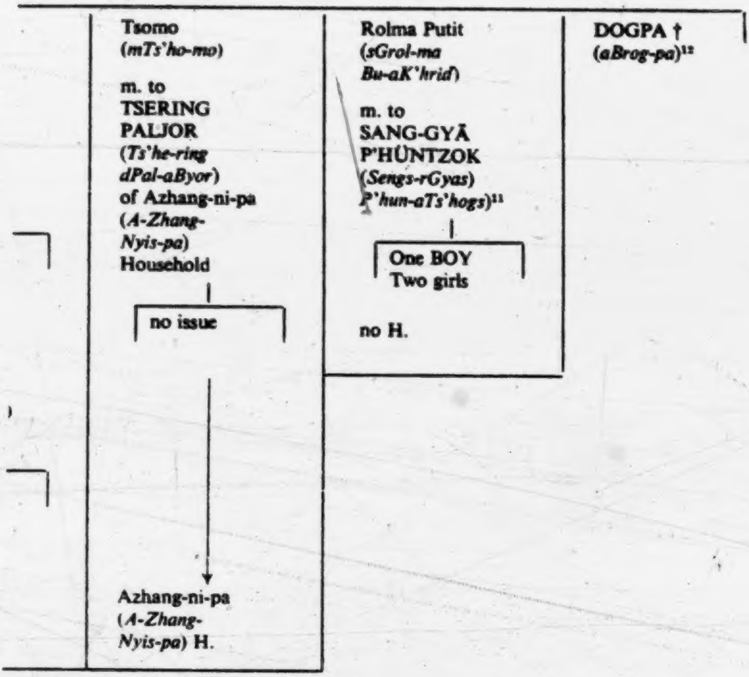
d continued it, while Ishe Paljor and Ishe continued

[7] *Porjag* taken after
[8] Childless still after
[9] Moslem name as m
[10] Same name as earli
[11] Moh. convert to B
[12] No name: this one

[facing p. 372-C]

Ladak

595
601


Tsomo
(*mTs'ho-mo*)
m. to
TSERING
PALJOR
(*Ts'he-ring*
dPal-aByor)
of Azhang-ni-pa
(*A-Zhang-*
Nyis-pa)
Household
no issue
Azhang-ni-pa
(*A-Zhang-*
Nyis-pa) H.
Rolma Putit
(*sGrol-ma*
Bu-aK'hrid)
m. to
SANG-GYĀ
P'HÜNTZOK
(*Sengs-rGyas*)
P'hun-aTs'hogs)[11]
One BOY
Two girls
no H.
DOGPA †
(*aBrog-pa*)[12]

---

[7] *Porjag* taken after 20 years of childless marriage.
[8] Childless still after 4 years could adopt a child.
[9] Moslem name as married a Moslem.
[10] Same name as earlier dead girl in commemoration.
[11] Moh. convert to Budh. Is now manager of Himis gompa.
[12] No name; this one against the evil eye (means "nomad").

[facing p. 372-D]

[551]
[754]

son, Murup, was, however, made Döndrup's heir at the Bata household, 595
so that he came to join his youngest father there, without putting the 601.
latter in a *k'hang-gu*. Some time later, he married Palkid of Tarig, and [591]
continued to live with his father in the Bata *k'hang-chen*. This was
some twenty four years ago, and in the meantime, Palkid not having [842]
any children, it was decided that a *porjag* should be called in. The
reason for this was apparently not only because of the wife's sterility.
As in the earlier case at Shing-k'hang-pa, I was told that Döndrup and
Murup were insufficient to cultivate the land, and that another man
was needed. Ishe Paljor of Shing-k'hang-pa household was thus called
in four years before my visit, and duly married to Palkid as her extra
husband. He was certainly a help in working the fields, but he in no
way remedied the barrenness of Murup's wife. She told me that they [597]
were now thinking adopting an heir, but she could not say whom they
had in mind at this early stage.

In the Tsong-k'har-pa household, I heard, there were now three [591]
k'hang-gus: one was that in which Putit, Döndrup's mother, lived (she
was still alive); the other, the one in which Ishe Paljor and Sang-gyä
Tsomo lived (Ishe, the younger brother had died after the polyandrous
marriage); and the third was the quite paradoxical *case of Deskid*, the
couple's daughter, who had rented one from her brother, Rigzin, who
was now in possession of the *k'hang-chen* with his wife, Tsering of
Shorepa, and their three children. On this rented portion, of which 428
she was a tenant without occupation, she lived with a *mag-pa* whom
she had taken to herself, a certain Tonyot of Azim-pa, and had one boy.
Her share was considered as a split-off portion of the Tsong-k'har-pa
household, and bore the name of Ralwa Tsong-k'har-pa, or "cleft Tsong-
k'har-pa". Her son was apparently considered to be the heir to this
new household, but how this was possible, considering the tenancy was
of so precarious a nature, was not explained to me.

Rigzin and Deskid had a younger brother, Ngawang, who had, however, 595
left the family before his elder brother married, and become a 601
lama at Himis gompa. He was entitled to a share of the family property 992
in accordance with Ladaki customary law, but for the time being
was not claiming it, and lived together with his fellow-monks on the
revenue of the monastery. He was also entitled to share his elder brother's
wife with the latter, his order not being celibate, but it was not
specified whether he did so or not.

Döndrup told us that of his other children, a daughter, now called 595
Aisha, bore that name because she had married a Moslem Ladaki with 601
whom she lived in Leh. 551

595 whom she lived in Leh. Three other daughters, Kundzom, Tsomo and
601 Rolma Putit, were all married out in *bag-ma*, the two first of these, at
least, to other families. They were the mistresses, respectively, of the
[797] Ragasha and the Azhang-ni-pa households, but their younger sister
had married a certain Sang-gyä P'hüntzok who, curiously enough, was
a convert to Buddhism from his original Moslem faith, – surely a very
rare occurrence. He was employed as a manager of the Himis gompa,
where he was in charge of trade and accounts, and made a comfortable
[792] living. But he had no household, and no *zhing-kham* to hand down,
so that they lived in quarters in the monastery grounds. His conversion
was responsible for this; the situation could nevertheless be remedied
if he purchased some land and settled on it. The couple had three
children, and the succession was thus assured beforehand.

595 114

(ii) *Information gathered concerning the functioning of polyandry in Ladak*

From all these families that I visited with Nono Tseten P'hüntzok between the 30th August and the 18th September 1938, I gathered much information as to the rules of polyandry, and how these marriages functioned.

184 I heard thus of the manner in which polyandry is regulated in Ladak.
595 In many ways, it appeared to be very similar to what I had already learned in Lahul, except that, perhaps because of the climate being colder, there seemed to be less sexual privacy. Another reason for this, probably, was that the Ladaki is more sedentary than the Lahuli and does not leave his home as regularly on commercial trips, so that one alone out of a woman's many husbands remains with her; in Ladak, all the brothers are almost constantly resident in the family house, and it is consequently more difficult to establish a sort of roster between them in their relations with the common wife.

595 Every house in Leh has a large common room, well heated because
342 the kitchen fireplace is either in it or close by, in another smaller room
[354] which communicates with it. This room is the one in which the entire family of the *k'hang-chen* lives during the long winter months, the one in which everything goes on all day and all night, eating, sleeping, procreation and the like. Its name is the *Jan-sa* (*Byan-sa*), which means "kitchen place", and I was told that the main reason for which everybody lives here in winter, herded together, is because it is warm and there is not enough fuel to heat the other rooms in the house.

595 Of course, it is not a rule that public mating in the *Jan-sa* takes place.
833

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

It all depends upon how people feel about such things, my informants 595 said. Sometimes, the wife will regulate who, of her many husbands, 833 should be with her; at other times, one of the brothers will do so, not necessarily the eldest, but generally the one with the most personality, the one who has the greatest influence with them all. Again, it is possible for the brothers to agree among themselves as to who shall go with their wife for the night, while it is not excluded that they should all of them have relations with her in the same night. Things can be done discreetly, in the dark, with some item of furniture in front of the bed for greater privacy. But this is not always the case, and often relations between husbands and the wife take place with a lamp lit, and in full view of the others, including the children. Not much clothing, however, is discarded, partly out of modesty, but also because it is cold.

I asked here, too, if signals were ever made use of at the door, should the marriage not be consummated in the common room. This question was usually received with great guffaws of laughter; the very idea seemed to amuse them. No, they said, there were no signals; nobody ever left anything at the door. As far as they knew, it had never been done, either.

To my question as to how, then, did they decide who should sleep with the common wife, one of my informants (at the Od-ldan household) looked at me slily and asked if I were, myself, married. When I answered that I was, he asked whether, then, I decided with my wife that, as let us say seven p.m. tonight, we would have intercourse? Naturally not, and he laughed; well, then it was the same with them. Such things took place tacitly, by implicit understanding, and with tact, not in accordance with a pre-arranged programme.

My investigations as to the possibility of jealousy affecting the relations between the husbands of a polyandrous Ladaki family led to the same results as in Lahul. I was told that nobody could afford to be jealous, that it was a luxury in which those who were rich enough to divide up property in other, less austere environments than theirs, could indulge. The Reverend W. Asboe was of the opinion that the ordinary average Ladaki was "not very passionate" as he put it, and that for this reason, they could not really feel the pangs of jealousy. He attributed this lack of passion to the altitude and to the climate which was so cold, and as proof of his allegation, he said that the Moslems, who elsewhere were so fiery about sexual matters and men's honour in these things, were also devoid of passion in Ladak, and often accepted situations there which they would have violently rebelled against elsewhere. No-

595
518
152
[184]

595 body denied, nevertheless, that jealousy was there, ever-present, under
578 the surface. All they said was that it is kept in check by the necessity
157 of the polyandrous system, which in turn is the result of the dearth of
resources which consequently should themselves be shared in so bleak
an environment.

844 The education of the children in a polyandrous household was the
next point which I took up. At birth, I heard, there was no midwifery,
mothers usually going to the assistance of their daughters and rendering
them the necessary service. After that, it was the mother who naturally
854 looked after the baby in its early infancy, often suckling it for a pro-
[853] tracted period of from one to three years, depending on subsequent
pregnancies. Sometimes, a woman would be assisted in the care of the
child by one of her own sisters from outside – either from the house of
her parents or from the house she had been married into in *bag-ma*.
863 Asked what were the rules of cleanliness taught early to a baby, I
was told that there were none. Children were left to do absolutely
whatever they liked in this respect, and put outside the house to play
in the lanes and fields with other children, without any constraint being
imposed upon them. Of course, if they dirtied the house, they were
scolded and driven outside, but beyond that attitude, the mother never
attempted to control them in such matters at all. (This might actually
514 account for the extraordinary freedom of Tibetans everywhere within
123 their cultural area in what concerns evacuatory functions; both men and
women seem to have no shame at all in performing on the streets in
public and before everybody's gaze. They will also follow Europeans
who try to retire in privacy, to see "how they do it" – one of the most
embarrassing things about field-work in Tibet.)

857 Children take to playing very early in the lanes and fields. They
make castles of mud and water, and nothing seems to amuse them more
during their first years. They then go over to more sophisticated games
such as hockey, riding on sticks, playing at being a family, at cultivating
the fields with small, imitation hoes, at being bride and bridegroom at
a wedding festival. Dolls are made for the girls out of rags, and the
boys go about with little axes made of wood. But they seem to tire of
such games at times, and often go back to making mud and water pies
and constructions.

595 It is at this stage that paternal authority makes itself felt. I asked
855 who was the father who took over control, expecting it to be the eldest,
as he is regarded as the head of the family. But I was told that this
was not so, and that it was the father who was the most influential who

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

imposed himself. He did not do so with any severity, however, as par- 595
ents are usually "afraid of their children", fearing that if they are too 855
strict, they will not be well treated by them later, when they themselves
have to go into the *k'hang-gu*.

I enquired who it was who gave the children their sex education. 864
The answer was that nobody did. Parents are forbidden by custom to
speak to them of such things, and they have to pick up what they can
learn from playmates. Another source of information was watching
animals, it seemed, and everyone agreed that they *may* learn something
from witnessing their parents' behaviour during the long winter nights
in the *Jan-sa*. Anyhow, they "somehow" knew about sex by the time
they were approximately six years of age.

Sexual games between children, as well as masturbation, were very
severely punished if discovered by the parents. The father would beat
a child caught playing with itself or attempting coitus with another [861]
child. Mothers, it seemed, did not beat, but pinched instead, and this
could be made very unpleasant for the victim. It was impressed upon [858]
me that if a child was a favourite, it might be dealt with more leniently,
and that no attempt to deal out punishment equally was made.

In very small children, masturbation was repressed by attempts to 864
frighten the child. It would be told by its mother that a sort of witch 861
called a *baghzi* (a Hindu name?) would come and either carry the child [754]
away, or cut off its ears and put them in a leather bag which the crea-
ture carried expressly for the purpose of collecting the ears of bad
children. No threat was ever made that the genital organs of the child
would be cut off, and the idea that this might be said seemed utterly
fantastic to my informants. As a sign of the times, I heard that children
were also threatened with being carried off by Tungan robbers (these [563]
were Chinese Moslems from Sinkiang who, in 1938, had just been
chased out of Turkestan by Soviet troops, and had escaped Southwards,
over the Karakorum pass; they stayed in Leh for some time before be-
ing repatriated by sea to China by the Government of India).

When children were between six and seven years old, their formal 872
education began. They were taught to read and write Tibetan by quali-
fied teachers, usually lamas, for about one year. Most of the teaching
consisted in getting the pupil to learn long texts by heart and reciting
them, in the very early morning. Corporal punishment was administer- [876]
ed if the lesson was not learned properly. When the year was up, more
practical things were taught, such as agriculture and the traditional [868]
ways in which crops are grown in Ladak. Pastoral duties were also in-
culcated into future herdsmen at this time, while others
learned a trade.

600 culcated into future herdsmen at this time, while others learned a trade.

872 792 Those children who were put in monasteries, either boys or girls, were usually sent there at the respective ages of eight and fourteen. The boys became lamas and were put through a very severe period of probation. They were attached to a master whom they had to serve completely, as if they were his body-servant. [876] Frequent corporal punishment was meted out to them and this was quite usual – in fact it was a perfectly correct thing to do, and many jokes had to do with the way in which a master gave his pupil a correction with a whip, on the slightest pretext, when he felt that he had not been attentive to his merest whim. In nunneries, very much the same happened, except that relations between elders and probationers were not so acute. A girl was usually trained by a *jetsün-ma* (*rJe-bTsun-ma*), or senior nun, before becoming a *cho-mo (Jo-mo)* or ordinary nun, and the relation between the two women was of a much less brutal nature.

595 428 (iii) *Reasons given for the existence of polyandry in Ladak*

The consensus of opinion among the informants in the various polyandrous households that I visited about why they followed this particular type of matrimonial custom, was that it was the only way to avoid dividing up the property and thus being impoverished in a bleak and arid land. I was also told, as a secondary reason, that it enabled a household to obtain the sufficient labour that it needed to cultivate the fields; where many brothers inherited the property jointly, and took one wife in common, they could easily cope with the work to be done, as there were enough hands to do it.

595 Only once did I hear that there might be yet another reason beyond these for which polyandry was followed by the Buddhist Ladakis of Tibetan affinity. It was on the 30th September 1938, near Ridzong, when we met a bandit from Tibet proper, called Norgyäs. He told me that polyandry was practised by Tibetans so as to avoid the wives of the brothers quarrelling. Peace in the house, according to him, could only be obtained if there was only one wife in the family.

595 114 The Reverend Walter Asboe was of the opinion that it was a blessing that polyandry existed among the Buddhists. In so poor and difficult an environment, he said, another matrimonial system would probably only lead either to strife over the obtention of food, or to widespread famine. In this, he was only echoing what previous Moravian missionaries as well as many authors have said when speaking or writing about the customs of the people in Ladak.

Ladak

A. Wilson, in *The Abode of Snow* (see Bibliography), says: "I was a little surprised to find that one of the Moravian missionaries defended the polyandry of the Tibetans, not as a thing to be approved of in the abstract and tolerated among Christians, but as good for the heathen of so sterile a country. In taking this view, he proceeded on the argument that superabundant population, in an unfertile country, must be a great calamity, and produce 'eternal warfare or eternal want'." (p. 647). 595 114

Captain H. L. Ramsay, in his *Western Tibet* (see Bibliography), goes even further and states that "it would be a misfortune if, with the introduction of Christianity, monogamy was introduced (in Ladak)". To this, the Reverend A. H. Francke, also of the Moravian Mission, writing in 1907, has to say that before Christianity came to Ladak, Mohammedanism was already there, and it is to the Moslems that we must look, before anything else, for change in matrimonial customs. In his opinion, polyandry is a disgusting practice which cannot be defended, and which should be replaced by a more ethical form of matrimony. The *Code of Tribal Custom of the Ladakh Tehsil* (see Bibliography) agrees with him in this, and, while stating that polyandry has obvious economic reasons for its existence, also maintains that it darkens the picture from a moral point of view and should not be allowed to continue.

In an article published in the Sunday Amrita Bazaar Patrika, a Calcutta newspaper, on March 16th 1952, and entitled "Poverty, Mass Ignorance and Social Evils in Ladakh", the special correspondent of the paper in Kashmir expresses the very current Indian opinion that "Two social evils, ugly and venomous, are eating into the vitals of Ladakh Buddhists. One is the custom of polyandry . . . the other the very common use of *chang* (beer)." He goes on to say, in the most significant passage of the article: "The supposed aim of polyandry, to keep the population within narrow limits, can only be reached if a number of women are ready to remain single. But this is not easy to achieve in any society and the result is immorality. From conditions obtaining in the country, I am forced to believe that polyandry has undermined the powers of increase of the people." For him, the only way to do away with the evil is to improve conditions in the land so that "the development of resources of the district bring enough wealth and strong public opinion" against polyandry.

(iv) *Other relevant information*

Enquiries about the kinship system in Ladak which I made, led me to observe that it was in every way a Western Tibetan one, identical terms 601 184

601 being used to those in Lahul. For this reason, it is unnecessary for me
[184] to repeat what I have already written in the passage about this in my
description of Lahul, and the reader is referred to it (see p. 326-7).
Two new terms, however, did come to light: *oma chik-pa* (*aO-ma gChig-pa*) for a milk brother or sister, and *chos-pün* (*Ch'hos sPun*) for broth-
ers in a religious order. The kinship system is descriptive, and is only
[609] used in a classificatory manner when addressing strangers (*meme* for
old men and lamas assimilated to grandfathers, *ama* for strange women
of the age of one's mother, etc.).

614 The patrilineal clans, each descendant from a common ancestor,
which I encountered in Lahul under the name of *rü* (*Rus*), are called
[184] *P'haspun* (*P'ha-sPün* or *P'has-sPun*) in Ladak. In accordance with
H. A. Jaeschke's *Tibetan-English Dictionary* (1949), p. 330, this name is given the English meaning of "several neighbours or inhabitants of a village that have a common *Lha* (or god) and thus have become *rus-pa cig-cig*, members of the same family; this common tie entails on them the duty whenever a death takes place, of caring for the cremation of the dead body".

From Nono Tse-P'hün, however, I learned that a *p'haspun* was primarily the group formed by all the male descendants of one paternal ancestor, and only secondarily really, by corruption, the group consisting of all those males who worship the same *Lha* or who are associated for burial purposes. Later, in 1953, when we met again, this time in Kalimpong, at the other end of India, he added something to the definition he had given me fifteen years earlier. He said that a *p'haspun* was a group consisting of men associated for purposes of financial support in difficult times.

It appears, thus, that in Ladak, although the *p'haspuns* are, first and
[164] foremost, patrilineal lineages or clans whose ancestry is traceable to a
single common progenitor and who worship a common *Lha* or god, they are also groups of kinfolk with a certain definite obligation of the members towards one another, namely that of caring for the cremation of the dead body when a death occurs within the group, and with the rather more ill-defined duty of helping each other financially in periods of economic distress.

[171] It is as though the Tibetan archaic, patrilineal, corporate group of
the lineage had overflowed its ancient, strictly parental nature in Ladak, and with time had assumed additional social significance, thus playing an important role in the economic life of a polyandrous people. I say this because we saw in Lahul – and, as we shall see from the material

which I collected later, in Kalimpong, about Central Tibet – the *rü* does 614
not carry with it such obligations between its members. It seems to [171]
be confined to the single function of prohibiting marriage within its fold. It is only an exogamous unit and not an association for mutual assistance.

In *East and West* (see Bibliography) I published a complete list of [114]
thirty five *p'haspuns* of Ladak, involving eighty six families, whose names, meaning of appellation, name of *lha*, and remarks on each of them, I have given simultaneously. Readers are referred to this article for the information, which I endeavoured to make as exhaustive as possible.

Regarding the question of the exogamy of the *p'haspuns* of Ladak, 614
I was told by Nono Tse-P'hün as well as by his father-in-law, Joseph 582
Gergan, that no one paid the slightest attention any longer to rules forbidding marriage within the *p'haspun*. As long as people were "not related", as they put it, (meaning, no doubt, not immediately related by ties of close family kinship), marriage was possible between members of families constituting a same *p'haspun*. The latter were really only inter-assistance organizations, they said, and had nothing to do with marriage rules any longer.

Ordinary folk from Ladak, however, from Leh and from its surroundings, whom I met on my visits to polyandrous households, and later, in Kalimpong, when they were on their way to or from Lhasa on pilgrimage, assured me that one should marry only outside the *p'haspun* to which one belonged. They all said that, as far as they were concerned, they would not think of doing otherwise.

The explanation of such divergent views must surely be, then, that 614
probably these vary with the class to which a man belongs, and to which 582
my informants belonged. The wealthier and more educated people, such 565
as Joseph Gergan and his son-in-law, no longer consider it necessary 184
to heed the ancient exogamous rules of the *p'haspun*. They have out- 178
grown them, have become modern, and such rules appear meaningless to them. But the peasant population of Ladak, by nature very conservative and certainly much less discerning, still adhere strictly to the rules, although they do so quite instinctively a[illegible] the "right" thing to do, and would be completely at a loss if they had to give the reason for their action.

I asked Joseph Gergan on one occasion (actually by letter to which 595
I received a reply on the 27th December 1938) if a *porjag* could be 614
of the same *p'haspun* as the common wife, or if he should be of the 582
842

595 same as the first husbands. His answer was that he should preferably
614 be of another *p'haspun* than the common wife (the rule of exogamy
582 playing here) but that there was no objection to him being of the same
842 one as the husbands, although it was not compulsory. He remarked that
such an extra man brought in to sire children in a barren union was generally younger than the men to whom the woman was married earlier.

614 Within each Ladaki *p'haspun* there exist rules of death and birth
765 pollution which are observed for varying periods of time according to
783 the *p'haspun*. I have given the length of the period in each case (vary-
ing from one week to one month) in the publication mentioned above
846 about the *p'haspuns*. The essence of this ritualistic observation is that
[264] people of the same *p'haspun* may not eat together for the stipulated
[784] period of time when they are either *Bangak* (*Bang-Ngag-la aDzem-ches*,
"to shrink from speaking to a parturient woman") in the case of birth pollution, or *Rongag* (*Ro-Ngag-la aDzem-ches*, "to shrink from speaking to a dead body") if it is death pollution that makes them ritually unclean.

614 During the period of birth pollution, extra to not eating with mem-
846 bers of one's *p'haspun*, parents may not go into the fields, must have
264 nothing to do with agriculture if the event take place during a period
783 of ploughing, sowing or harvesting, and may not jump over any irri-
784 gating water channel in the fields, for the whole period of time. The
mother particularly, is not allowed to touch any of the eating utensils,
[241] the fire-place, or other people's food. Before the return to normal can
take place for all these people, a *lhabsang* (*lHa-bSang*) or "god-clean" ceremony has to occur at the home of the afflicted. It is conducted by a lama who reads the scriptures (prayers which my notes call *lha-bSag*) while he beats cymbals and a drum. He is offered tea in the customary fashion.

614 Another period of ritual uncleanliness with Ladakis is that which
783 follows the death of a wife or a husband. When one of the latter dies,
765 the wife is *yuksamo* (*Yugs-sa-mo*) or polluted for a duration of time
varying in accordance with circumstances, whether it is the eldest or a
younger spouse who has died, and also with respect to different parts
[264] of Ladak. During this time, the widow will cover herself with a black
piece of clothing, sit in some dark recess of the house, and have her food cooked and served to her in separate dishes from the rest of the family. She, too, is restored to normality again when her relations come, bringing a lama with them, and perform a *lhabsang* ceremony of purification.

264

A man is *yuksapa* (*Yugs-sa-pa*) after the death of his wife, also for 614
a period of time the duration of which depends on circumstances (if it 783
is the senior or one of the junior wives) and on the part of Ladak. His 765
mourning is less severe than that of a woman, and all he has to do is [784]
to keep from rejoicing and amusing himself, not put on any jewelry or gay colours, wear his hat with the side flaps turned down. He may eat in common with the members of his household and need not stay indoors for the length of time that he is unclean.

During the period of birth pollution, a certain number of ceremonies 846
connected with the new-born child take place in the house of its parents. 852
If it is a boy, a *da-dar* (*mDa-dar*), that is an arrow with silk ribbons of 783
five different colours attached to it, is placed in a pot of grain next to
the mother's bed. Before the babe takes its first milk, one of the fathers [853]
(the most influential one) takes a spoon and with saffron powder draws the last letter of the Tibetan alphabet "A" in reverse on it. He then prints this letter on the child's mouth, be it a boy or a girl, and it is only after this that it is allowed to take any nourishment.

The next step is to call in an *Onpo* (*dbang-po*) or astrologer, who is [787]
entrusted with making the baby's horoscope. Seven days later, relatives
and visitors, but no one of the new-born's *p'haspun*, arrive to con- [614]
gratulate. They bring *mar-zan* (*Mar-Zan*) or "butter-porridge" (made of butter, rice sugar and apricots) with them and feast on it with the family.

At the same time as the *lhabsang* cleansing ceremony takes place, [302]
the child has its hair cut (*gJur*) in a special way – short on top, but left [301]
long on the sides –, a black soot mark is placed on its face from the tip of its nose upwards towards and over its forehead, and it is given iron bangles to wear. It will keep all these marks until it is four or five years old.

After the cleaning ceremony is finished, the parents can go normally 846
about their business again. It is then that relatives and friends, including 852
members of the *p'haspun*, come on visit in a festival called *Da-kang* 431
(*Zla-Gang*) or "month full". They bring ornaments, presents for the [614]
child, and some coins of one pice (called *Tambol* in Ladak, which I presume to be a Hindu word as it is not Tibetan). This money is paid to the parents, but it is repayable, in that when the giver has a birth in his house, the amount will have to be paid back by the present recipient.

The paternal aunt (father's sister) brings a special type of cap to this 846
festival, called a *Pan-ju* (*Pan-Jwu*) or "small Pandit cap", a type of 852
292
604

Ladak

846 headgear resembling that in which the Tibetan saint Padmasambhava
857 (Guru Rimpoche) is always attired, and she puts it on the child's head.
[604] It will wear this until it grows out of it. The feast lasts two days, and
[242] the guests are served with *amai mar-zan* (*Ama-ai Mar-zan*) or "mother's
mar-zan", which all can now safely eat in the household.

In wealthier families, two more festive occasions are observed: *Bdün-da-kang* (*bDun Zla-Gang*) after seven weeks (*Bdün* stands for "seven") in which many more people, sometimes the whole village, are entertained; and *pang-ri* (*Pang-Dri*) or "lap fragrance" in which a vast concourse of friends, relatives and guests are entertained for three days, if
[603] the new-born is a boy. On this last occasion, it is customary for the
maternal grandmother to have *tsampa* served to everybody present.

There is no equivalent of the *ral-dag* or hair-cutting ceremony of
[184] Lahul, in Ladak. But at the birth of a son, it is not unusual for super-
[302] stitious people to cut off a small lock and to stuff it into a willow tree.
This is called the performance of *ral-chang* (*Ral-lChang*) or "long-hair willow".

553 A child receives its names at no special time. There are three of
[551] them, and one of them is always kept secret and never revealed during
the whole lifetime of the person. The parents can name their child, or they can take it to a lama who will give it names in writing on a piece of Tibetan paper, stamped with the seal of the monastery. The astrologer is sometimes asked to give auspicious names to a child after he has made its horoscope, and in the more important Ladaki families it is customary for the king of Ladak to be asked to name their offspring.

171 I have gone at length into these various ceremonies connected with the birth and initiation of children, as well as with notions of cleanliness and pollution in ritual matters which have to do with child-bearing and death, because it appears to me to be so very revealing of the psychology of the polyandrous Ladakis. Such ritualistic practices are to be found in other, non-polyandrous societies elsewhere in the world, and they compare very favourably with Indian ways in these matters. But it is of interest, it seems to me, to note that they exist also among the polyanders of an area of Tibetan cultural affinity, with the special characteristics which I have described above.

(v) *Medical information*

114 As I had already done in Lahul, I also visited medical men in Ladak,
158 and the hospitals in Leh, in order to gather information concerning the
nervous ailments of the population. It was, I thought, important to do

so, especially when, in Kyelang, I had discovered significant psychological 114
disorders in members of polyandrous households. In Ladak, the 158
information that I gathered was not quite as sensational, but it confirmed
to a large extent what I already knew now about the psychopathology
of the people of these regions.

My first such visit was to the Kashmir State hospital in Leh on the 164
30th August, 1938. There I met the chief physician in charge, a Dogra [115]
medical officer called Dr. M. S. Diwani. He told me that venereal [743]
diseases were, as usual, the dominant illnesses which he had to treat.
He attributed their wide distribution in Ladak to contacts with Moslem
traders from Sinkiang, who passed them on through the intermediary
of the temporary wives which they took from the local, Buddhist population.
Extra to digestive troubles due to a diet of excessive tea and 158
chang drinking, there were many cases of epilepsy and hysteria. The 164
former sickness seemed mostly to plague Moslem women, while the latter
was the perogative of single Buddhist women and nuns in the nunnerise.
They got attacks usually during their menstrual periods, and
nearly always at night. The cure for these afflictions was in the hands [755]
of the *amchis*, who cauterized the head of the patient in prescribed places.

There was much osteomelitis about, Dr. Diwani said, and it was due 164
to the *purdah* habits of Moslem women, because they did not get sufficient
sun. The Buddhist women who worked on the fields never suffered
from this illness. He knew of no cases of impotence or frigidity, [833]
as no one had been to see him for such ailments. There was madness [158]
in the area, the most significant case being that of the *Tulku* (*sPrul-sKu*)
or Incarnation of Tikse Gompa (see *The Mad Tulku of Tikse* by the
same author, Stepping Stones, Kalimpong, 1950). To my question as 838
to whether he knew of homosexuality in Ladak, Dr. Diwani said that 792
it was widespread in the monasteries, where the relations between master
and novice were universally known to take on that character.

On the 1st September 1938, when I visited the Gad-po-pa (*rGad-po-pa*) 158
household, and made its genealogy (see p. 368), I took advantage 164
of my talk with the informant Chond who, it will be recalled, was [115]
an *amchi* or native doctor, to enquire from him about his practice.
He told me that he had many cases of giddiness to deal with, and he
attributed this to bad diet in the case of the men, and to irregularities
in the menses of women. There were no cases of impotence or frigidity, [833]
as far as he knew, but many of anxiety and hysteria, which he had to
treat, nearly always, in women. They were mainly to be found among 158
single women and nuns, and often took the form of nervous blindness [753]

158 and deafness for certain periods of time. He attributed this to devils
[153] which possessed the individual concerned, and he, personally, tried to
cure them by cauterization of the head. If this did not help, the patients
[755] were advised to visit the lamas, who gave the religious formulas to eat,
or carried out exorcisms over them. Chonde showed me his cauterization
instruments and a chart which guided him as to where to apply
the red-hot irons.

[115] The Reverend Walter Asboe, whose Moravian Mission ran a small
[043] dispensary and hospital in the Mission House in Leh, was also informative
[164] about nervous ailments in the town. He said that men did come
to be cured of impotence, but that they were nearly all physical cases
[833] and definitely not mental ones. As it was, it was not living in polyan-
548 dry which made them impotent, for if the common wife was not to their
[595] liking, they could always seek relief with some of the numerous prosti-
[795] tutes that were to be found in Leh. All of these professionals, he said,
were Moslems, not Buddhists, and were usually recruited from among
the temporary wives, converted to Mohammedanism by the Yarkandi
traders, surplus women left over by the polyandry of the Buddhist
Ladakis.

[158] The Reverend Asboe had come across no cases of frigidity in women,
[795] but, on the contrary, he knew of many cases of nymphomania. Again,
[833] this affliction was to be found among the Moslem women converts,
never among the polyandrous wives of the Buddhist households. He
838 had also heard that homosexuality was prevalent in the monasteries,
792 and since, he said, Jaeschke's *Tibetan-English Dictionary* contained all
the numerous Tibetan terms for various sexual perversions, it seemed
from this that these were widespread throughout Ladak.

[115] Nono Tse-P'hün, as my principal interpreter and informant, was of
an opposite opinion. He said that homosexuality was a punishable offence
in Kashmiri law, and therefore did not exist in Ladak. It was
looked upon with great disfavour anyhow, by the Ladakis, and he felt
sure that no one indulged in it, not even in the monasteries. In Tibet,
it was another matter, he added, and it was known that it was practised
in the large monasteries of Central Tibet, as any monk returning from
Lhasa or Shigatse where he had gone for his studies could tell.

296 With regard to prostitution, this is the place perhaps, to mention
171 what Joseph Gergan once told me about the smoking of tobacco. I had
asked him on the 14th October 1938, in Kargil, as we were travelling
together towards the Kashmir capital, Srinagar, how it was that in the
whole of Tibet and in areas under the cultural influence of that country,

Ladak
Tibet AJ1

WT
276
171

smoking was looked upon as so heinous an offence. He replied that it was because, so the lamas said, tobacco was a weed grown from the menstrual flow of a prostitute who had prayed that it might fertilize a plant that would be the joy of mankind. For this reason, lamas could not think of smoking, and they naturally opposed it in the lay population as well.

T
115

c) *Investigation of polyandry along the Leh-Srinagar Treaty Road*

1. *Information gathered at Spituk and Ri-dzong*

At our first halt after leaving Leh, I gathered interesting information concerning polyandry in the central Tibetan provinces from the acting chief abbot of the monastery, who had studied in Lhasa. I shall revert to what he told me when we come to Part II, where I shall deal with the polyandry of Tibet proper.

WT
T
115

At Ri-dzong, the Tibetan bandit, Norgyäs, had much to tell me also. He told me a certain amount about the marital customs of those parts of Tibet which he knew personally, but also about those specifically appertaining to Western Tibet. It is these which I shall account for here.

It seemed that my informant was born in Ngari Korsum and had only later in his life taken to banditry. At the age of nine, he was adopted by a lama, the assistant of the Garpön of Gartok, that is of the Tibetan Government official whose residence was in the capital of Ngari Korsum.

The lama's name was De-chen-la (*bDe-Ch'hen-lags*) and he had a sister living with him who was married and had a son, Dön-stob-la (*Don-sTobs-lags*), of the same age as Norgyäs. Although there was a relation of master to servant between the two boys (the lama's nephew being the superior), a very intimate bond was formed between the two. When Dön-stob-la married, Norgyäs was allowed to share the wife with him, and this because the two had become what he called *skyidug-chik-pa* (*sKyid-sDug-gChig-pa*).

This long word has the meaning of "Happiness-Grief-Identical" and such a relation is very often entered into in Tibet between close friends. Norgyäs said that, in his case, it was only a minor variety of the relation because, normally, it is a much more formal and binding connection.

WT
T
572
837

Thus in Tibet, and also in Ladak, two old friends who had known each other for a long time could become *skyidug-chik-pa* in the following way. They make a vow, clasping each other's middle finger, in which they swear to share undividedly everything that they have for the rest of their lives, and even in the next one that awaits them. If

WT
T
572
837
[115]

one of them is married, or gets married later, it is agreed that the friends will also share the wife. When Don-chen-la died, Norgyäs was left alone with their common spouse, and he came to Ladak with her.

I asked the informant if he knew of cases of exchange of wives, in which married men had simply taken each other's wives, as I had heard of this before I visited Ladak, but had not been able to find any actual cases. He told me that this did happen, precisely between people who were *skyidug-chik-pa*. If they both married, they would exchange the women after some time, to show that they really did have everything in common, and then later revert back to those they originally had. Thus, he knew of a certain Changling Cholak and a *Dzong-pön* (*Dzong-dPon*) or magistrate, called Nichang(?), who were linked by such a "happiness-grief-identical" relation in Lhasa. They exchanged their wives in this manner, even after they had had children with them. The offspring did not, however, follow the mother, but remained with the father (presumably until the mother returned home again after some years).

WT
T
837

Norgyäs assured me, too, that wives were often offered to important guests when they visited a family, although the custom was declining. Joseph insisted that this did not exist in Ladak, and that he had never come across it there. Norgyäs, however, said that he knew of Ladaki cases of such hospitality too, and Joseph said that it must, then, be close to the Chang-t'hang borders. The bandit admitted that this was so, in the neighbourhood of lake Pang-kong, in the extreme east.

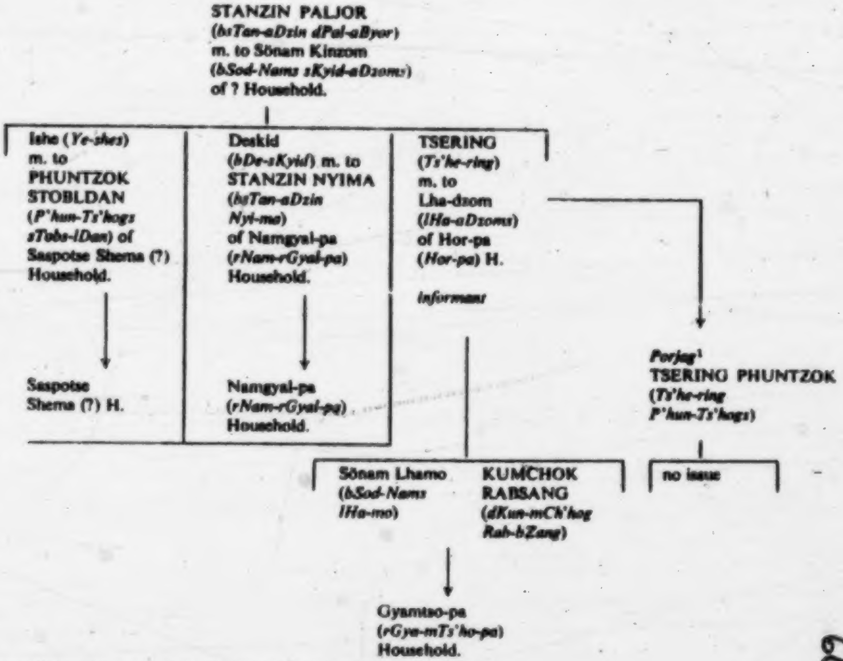
WT
595
601
WT
[115]
WT
[591]

2. *Polyandrous families at Kalatse and Mulbek*

On the 4th October 1938 at Kalatse, Joseph Gergan took me to a household named Gyamtso-pa, where there was a *porjag*, that is, where non-fraternal polyandry was practised. I made the genealogy of this family, and it is given in Table 35. The informant was Lha-dzom, a woman, about thirty five years old, with a lively manner, who seemed very pleased to give us all the details which we wished to learn from her. She and her two husbands, Tsering and Tsering P'hüntzok, together with her two children, Sonam Lhamo, a girl, and Kumchok Rabsang, a boy, lived in a *k'hang-chen*, while her first husband's father and mother lived in the *k'hang-gu*. Tsering's two sisters, who were older than him, had been married off in *bag-ma* to other households. The two children born to Tsering and Lha-dzom were as yet unmarried, although quite grown-up, and lived with their parents and their mother's second husband, Tsering P'hüntzok, the *porjag*.

[Text continues on p. 390]

TABLE 35. GENEALOGY OF THE GYAMTSO-PA (*rGya-mTs'ho-pa*) HOUSEHOLD.


STANZIN PALJOR
(*bsTan-aDzin dPal-aByor*)
m. to Sönam Kinzom
(*bSod-Nams sKyid-aDzoms*)
of ? Household.
Ishe (*Ye-shes*)
m. to
PHUNTZOK
STOBLDAN
(*P'hun-Ts'hogs sTobs-lDan*) of
Saspotse Shema (?)
Household.
Deskid
(*bDe-sKyid*) m. to
STANZIN NYIMA
(*bsTan-aDzin Nyi-ma*)
of Namgyal-pa
(*rNam-rGyal-pa*)
Household.
TSERING
(*Ts'he-ring*)
m. to
Lha-dzom
(*lHa-aDzoms*)
of Hor-pa
(*Hor-pa*) H.
informant
Saspotse
Shema (?) H.
Namgyal-pa
(*rNam-rGyal-pa*)
Household.
Porjag[1]
TSERING PHUNTZOK
(*Ts'he-ring P'hun-Ts'hogs*)
Sönam Lhamo
(*bSod-Nams lHa-mo*)
KUMCHOK
RABSANG
(*dKun-mCh'hog Rab-bZang*)
no issue
Gyamtso-pa
(*rGya-mTs'ho-pa*)
Household.

---

[1] Married after eighteen years of marriage to Tsering, three years ago in 1938.

Conventional signs as in Table 27.

595 I enquired from the informant why she had married a second husband in this way, considering that she had had children by her first one and that, consequently, it did not seem at all necessary for her to take so drastic a step. Her answer confirmed my belief that a second husband is often brought in in order to acquire more labour for the cultivation of the family plot, for she replied: "I married Tsering P'hüntzok because Tsering was old and unable to work very well any more." She then added the informative remark: "It is cheaper to take an extra husband than a servant."

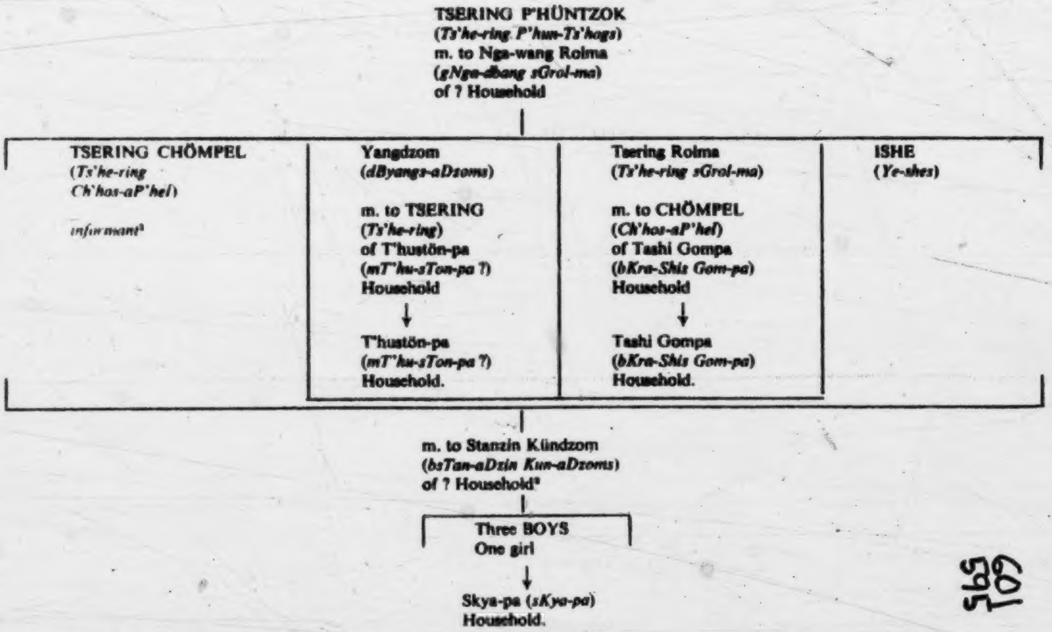
Neighbours, whom Joseph and I questioned later about this family, assured us, nevertheless, that Lha-dzom had not spoken the truth to us. They scoffed at her statements that she needed more labour on her husband's estate, and said that she was a very ardent woman, whom old Tsering could no longer satisfy sexually. So she had taken Tsering P'hüntzok who was much younger (28 years old, they said), and Tsering had agreed to it because he was tired of his wife's sexual appetite anyway. I must say that in my interview with the woman, I did form the impression that there probably was some truth in the neighbour's gossip. It did not mean, however, that what Lha-dzom had told us was not true; both pronouncements could be correct, for having a new husband, while very pleasant from the matrimonial point of view, was also useful in what concerned the cultivation of the fields. Pleasure and business thus appeared admirably combined in Lha-dzom's case, and Tsering, who could have objected and might have been the major obstacle, made no trouble and accepted the situation. He probably got something out of it, too.

834 124 595 I had heard so much about these people's sexual life during these interviews, that it came as a surprise to me when I asked Joseph to enquire if anybody knew anything about father and son polyandry in Kalatse and he refused to do so. We were in conversation with a female neighbour at the time, and Joseph flatly refused to enquire about the subject upon which I wanted information because, he said, it is not possible to question a woman about sexual matters in Tibet if she is either younger or older than yourself. The same applied to close relatives, and the prohibition was called *ka-dzem-ches* (*K'ha-aDzem-Ches*) meaning "mouth to shrink from". What we had been told about Lha-dzom did not come under the category of questioning the woman on sexual affairs, it seemed, since she had volunteered the information which we had heard. What was not possible, I gathered, was for Joseph to put queries about sex to the woman. So I was not able to get the

[TEXT continues on P. 392]

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
601
595

TABLE 36. GENEALOGY OF SKYA-PA (*sKya-pa*) HOUSEHOLD.


TSERING P'HÜNTZOK (*Ts'he-ring P'hun-Ts'hogs*) m. to Nga-wang Roima (*gNga-dbang sGrol-ma*) of ? Household
TSERING CHÖMPEL (*Ts'he-ring Ch'hos-aP'hel*) *informant*[1]
Yangdzom (*dByangs-aDzoms*) m. to TSERING (*Ts'he-ring*) of T'hustön-pa (*mT'hu-sTon-pa ?*) Household
T'hustön-pa (*mT'hu-sTon-pa ?*) Household.
Tsering Roima (*Ts'he-ring sGrol-ma*) m. to CHÖMPEL (*Ch'hos-aP'hel*) of Tashi Gompa (*bKra-Shis Gom-pa*) Household
Tashi Gompa (*bKra-Shis Gom-pa*) Household.
ISHE (*Ye-shes*)
m. to Stanzin Kündzom (*bsTan-aDzin Kun-aDzoms*) of ? Household[2]
Three BOYS
One girl
Skya-pa (*sKya-pa*) Household.

[1] Officially the only one married, and head of the family.

[2] She said that she would only speak if I paid her.

Conventional signs as in Table 27.

124 information that I wanted on the subject of fathers and sons sharing
595 a wife in Kalatse.

[834] Four days later, on the 8th October 1938, we were in Mulbek, the last village where people of Tibetan cultural affinity are to be found on the way westwards. Here, too, I discovered polyandrous families, and interviewed them through Joseph, but with some difficulty. It ap-
[177] peared that we had now reached a frontier area, one in which culture contact with non-polyandrous people existed and, as is usual in such a case, those practising polyandry were self-conscious about the custom and reluctant to speak about it to strangers. The first of two genealogies which I was able, nevertheless, to take down, is given in Table 36.

We went to this household, called Skya-pa, because a Moslem whom Joseph knew in the bazaar had told us that we would find a *porjag* in it. In the neighbourhood of the house we were, however, stopped by its inmates, who refused to let us approach it. They were a surly lot, the women wearing a sort of diminutive *perak* (*berag*) on their forehead and no woollen ears any longer, the men dressed in the usual Ladaki clothes. They seemed very reluctant even to speak to us, and Joseph had the greatest difficulty in getting anything out of them. They said that we could not go to the house because it was dirty, and only with the worst possible grace, condescended to speak to us where we stood, in the lane leading to their home.

595 A man called Tsering Chömpel was our informant. He told us that
601 his parents, Tsering P'hüntzok his father, and Ngawang Rolma his
[115] mother, lived in the *k'hang-gu*, while he with his wife, their four children
[591] and his younger brother, Ishe, lived in the *k'hang-chen*. He told us, too, that his two sisters, Yangdzom and Tsering Rolma, were married out in *bag-ma* to other households, respectively to Tsering of T'hustön-pa household, and Chömpel of Tashi Gompa household.

595 Asked if these two households were polyandrous, he said no, that they were not. Pressed, he added that polyandry was not practised in Mulbek, and that he himself did not share his wife, Stanzin Kündzom, with Ishe. This was denied later by Joseph, who told me that from friends of his in Mulbek, he knew that polyandry existed there just as much as in the rest of Ladak, but that the people did not like to admit it, were shy to do so, and even somewhat ashamed. When I asked about the rumoured *porjag* said to exist there, needless to say, this was hotly denied. We were asked what our source of information was, which we naturally refused to divulge. Whereupon Tsering Chömpel said to Joseph that his family was being slandered.

Stanzin Kündzom refused to speak during the whole interview. I 595
tried to draw her out at the beginning, but she made it perfectly clear 124
at once that she would only say something if I paid her then and there.
Not wishing to do this for fear of setting a bad example and creating
a precedent, we carried on with her husband who was somewhat more
accommodating, and eventually gave him a monetary reward when we
had finished, for which he expressed his thanks.

That same morning, Joseph and I went on to another polyandrous
family of Mulbek, called *Yoktso-pa* (*gYog-Ts'hogs-pa*) (Table 37).
These people, who appeared to be as poor and as suspicious of us as
the others but were slightly more accommodating in that they did admit [591]
to being polyandrous, lived in a *k'hang-gu* in which there were two
brothers married to one wife, and in a *k'hang-chen,* the inhabitants of
which were the two sons of the former and their common wife, young
people who had only recently been married and did not yet have any
children.

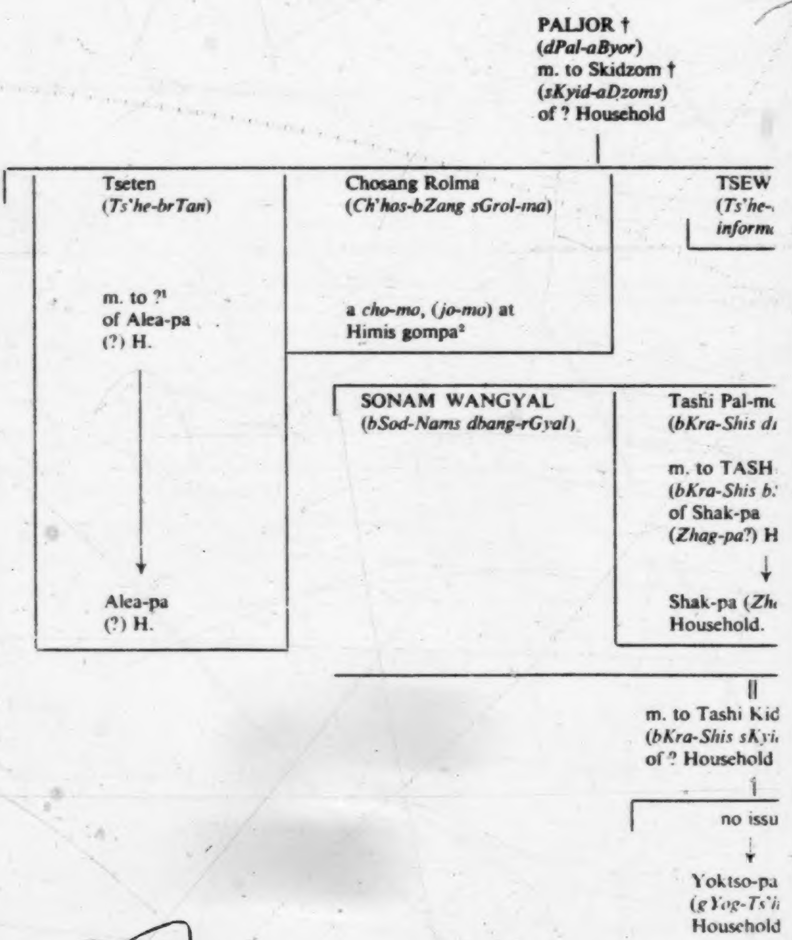
Tsewang, the eldest of the older generation, acted as the informant, 595
but his brother, Tsewang Paljor, and their common wife, Nordzom 601
Rolma, assisted him greatly. These people told us that their parents, [115]
Paljor their father, and Skidzom their mother, had died some years ago,
and that they were consequently occupying the *k'hang-gu* now themselves,
since the marriage of their grown-up children. Their eldest sister,
Tseten, was married away in *bag-ma* to three brothers in a household
called Alea-pa, while the second sister, also elder to them, Chosang
Rolma, was a nun. This woman was present at the interview, and we 792
heard that she was normally resident at Himis gompa, but that she 782
often came home on visits. She had no particular inclination to be a 595
nun, it seemed, since she had been sent to the monastery by her parents 601
when, as a child, she had nearly died, and they had made a vow that
if she recovered, they would dedicate her to Himis.

The informant and his brother, together with their common wife, 595
Nordzom Rolma, had had three children, two boys, Sonam Wangyal 601
and Tsewang Tashi, and one daughter, born between these two, called
Tashi Pal-mo. The latter was married off to Tashi Sonam of Ṣhak-pa
Household, while the two boys had a wife in common, whom they had
married recently. Her name was Tashi Kidzom, and they lived with
her in the *k'hang-chen*, which they had just taken over. They had been
married too short a time to have children yet, and that is all that the
words "no issue" mean in the genealogical table.

It had not been too difficult here, to find out that these people were [792]

TABLE 37. GENEALOGY OF YOKTSO-PA (*gYog-Ts'hc*

595
601


PALJOR †
(dPal-aByor)
m. to Skidzom †
(sKyid-aDzoms)
of ? Household
Tseten
(Ts'he-brTan)
m. to ?[1]
of Alea-pa
(?) H.
Alea-pa
(?) H.
Chosang Rolma
(Ch'hos-bZang sGrol-ma)
a cho-mo, (jo-mo) at
Himis gompa[2]
TSEW
(Ts'he-
inform
SONAM WANGYAL
(bSod-Nams dbang-rGyal)
Tashi Pal-mo
(bKra-Shis d
m. to TASH
(bKra-Shis b
of Shak-pa
(Zhag-pa?) H
Shak-pa (Zh
Household.
m. to Tashi Kid
(bKra-Shis sKyi
of ? Household
no issu
Yoktso-pa
(gYog-Ts'h
Household

[1] Married to three brothers, names unknown.

[2] She nearly died as a child and was dedicated to the monastery if she survived.

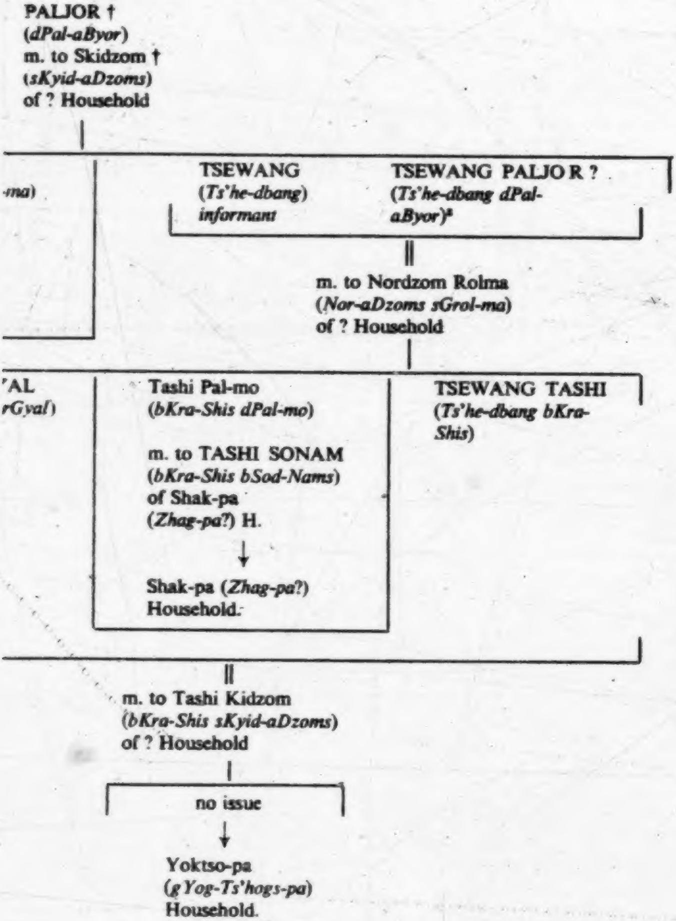
[3] A lama, whose existence was kept secret from me; being of the un-reformed, Red-hat se brothers with them.

Conventional signs as in Table 27.

[facing P. 393-A]

595
601

YOKTSO-PA (*gYog-Ts'hogs-pa*) HOUSEHOLD.


PALJOR †
(dPal-aByor)
m. to Skidzom †
(sKyid-aDzoms)
of ? Household
-ma)
TSEWANG
(Ts'he-dbang)
informant
TSEWANG PALJOR ?
(Ts'he-dbang dPal-aByor)²
m. to Nordzom Rolma
(Nor-aDzoms sGrol-ma)
of ? Household
'AL
rGyal)
Tashi Pal-mo
(bKra-Shis dPal-mo)
m. to TASHI SONAM
(bKra-Shis bSod-Nams)
of Shak-pa
(Zhag-pa?) H.
Shak-pa (Zhag-pa?)
Household.
TSEWANG TASHI
(Ts'he-dbang bKra-Shis)
m. to Tashi Kidzom
(bKra-Shis sKyid-aDzoms)
of ? Household
no issue
Yoktso-pa
(gYog-Ts'hogs-pa)
Household.

---

tery if she survived.

f the un-reformed, Red-hat sect *Nyingma-pa*, he shared the common wife of his

[facing P. 393-B]

595 601 792 polyandrous, thus giving the lie to those of Skya-pa household who said that no one was polyandrous in Mulbek. But, all the same, the Yoktso-pa family did hide something from me, which I would never have heard about had it not been for Joseph Gergan. As we were returning to our camp, he mentioned to me that he knew that Tsewang and Tsewang Paljor shared their wife, Nordzom Rolma, with yet another brother of theirs, who was a Red-hat, unreformed *Nying ma-pa* sect lama. And as we passed down the street away from the household we had just visited, I noticed a monk, clad in the usual red clothes, coming out of a house close-by, and immediately entering another one, as if he did not wish to be seen by us. Joseph pointed him out to me, and told me that this was the man. He lived in the local monastery in the town, and was maintained by it; but he had not given up his share of the family property when he left, and he was still closely associated with his brothers. Not being obliged by the rules of his order to observe celibacy, he shared the common wife, Nordzom Rolma, with them. It was remarkable how the family had not wished to let us know this, and had even witheld mentioning the existence of the lama brother. Joseph did not know his name, so that I was unable to put it down in the genealogy. He was younger than the two other men, and I have consequently shown him after them for this reason.

595 —177 847 During the day, investigating the rumour and counter rumour concerning a *porjag* in the Skya-pa household, I heard that no such an institution existed west of the P'hoto-la, the last pass which we had crossed before reaching Mulbek. Asked why this was so, Joseph was told in the village that it was because it was an immoral practice which should not be encouraged. Once again, this appeared to me to be an indication of the effects of culture contact, the people in this frontier area being ashamed of the custom of calling a man in when they had failed to have issue with a woman's other husbands, as is the practice further east in Ladak. The Moslems, however, insisted that *porjags* existed in secret, and assured us that the Buddhists who denied this were not telling the truth.

PART II

000

THE POLYANDRY OF THE TIBETANS OF TIBET PROPER

In Appendix 1, will be found the account of how we went from Kashmir to Kalimpong in Bengal for the first time in 1938, and returned

24: Peter

AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Lahul
Ladak

104

Bagma marriage - marriage in which the sons of a family take one wife in common [bagma - "bride," wife in a bagma marriage]

Magpa marriage - marriage in which the daughter inherits all property (when there are no male heirs) and takes as many husbands as she wishes. [magpa = "bridegroom," husband in a magpa marriage]

P'horjag (porjag) - an extra man brought in when the husband or husbands fail to produce a child with their wife (he is treated as a brother after joining the others in marriage)

K'hang-chen - the main portion of the family (ancestral) property occupied by the sons and their wife.

K'hang-gu - the smaller portion of the family (ancestral) property occupied by the fathers, mother and unmarried sisters.

P'haspun - patrilineal clan

104

Jagir khoti - land of the landlords

Khalsa khoti - government land, which is allotted to individuals who pay taxes and render services to the government

[Zhing - kham - In Ladak this is comparable to the khalsa khoti of Lahul]

[Information on the maintenance of estates intact within a polyandrous family through joint ownership of land by brothers who are co-husbands will be found in category 428.]

592

[For information on polyandrous households see category 595.]